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ABSTRACT

This thesis undertakes an exploration of teaching at the margins in an effort to articulate teaching assumptions to improve education of multicultural groups. The methodology of retrospective dialogue is explained in chapter 1. Chapter 2 describes two theories that have been advanced for the education of poor/immigrant/working class children--traditional/acculturationist and multicultural/assimilationist. The assumptions of these theories are presented and contrasted with evolving ones. The dialogue of chapter 3 recapitulates the experiences and thought processes as they have interacted with experiences across classrooms and over the years. Through a dialogue on philosophy and pedagogy, the idea of synthesis emerges. Chapter 4 articulates the dialogue's emergent ideas about teaching socioeconomically and educationally underprepared adults. It presents an alternative model of Multicultural Education against Marginality, which reconciles ideological partisanship and commitment to the tenets of multiculturalism with the principles and practices of effective teaching. Contains 73 references. (YLB)

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ED 368 906

REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING AT THE "MARGINS": RECONCEPTUALIZING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by

Eva Meredith Mack

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

& COMMUNITY STUDIES

at

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN -MILWAUKEE

AUGUST 1993

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Reflections on Teaching at the "Margins":

Reconceptualizing Multicultural Education

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies

August 1993

Ronald L Podeschi — August 9, 1993

Major Professor — Date

Graduate School Approval — Date

Reflections onTeaching at the "Margins":

Reconceptualizing Multicultural Education

by

Eva Meredith Mack

The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, 1993

Under the Supervision of Professor Ronald Podeschi

Using the methodologies of teacher retrospect and dialogue, the preparation for and experiences of teaching socio-economically marginalized and educationally underprepared adults are probed in search of insights from which "Theories of Action" emerge and reconceptualize Multicultural Education. While embracing the psychological and pedagogical arguments for culturally relevant curricula, culture is redefined as the interpretation of lived-experience at a distance from the mainstream. A Curriculum Against Marginality proposes that ideological partisanship with and visceral knowledge of students is central to effective pedagogy. Content-based instruction, an honest approach to subjects and learning mediated through the re-examination of students' common experiences vis a vis mainstream institutions develop both students' critical awareness of and ability to negotiate their immediate and world contexts.

Ronald L Podeschi
Major Professor

August 9, 1993
Date

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Acknowledgements

When you're walking on fences - as between two voices - it's good to have friends on either side of you who don't think you're crazy for wanting to walk on fences when the ground on either side is more certain not to hurt you. They respectfully don't hold your hand , but help you keep your *own* balance by letting you know that they are there, following your steps. For me these people have been Professor Ron Podeschi, my advisor in the Masters Program of the Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies, and Tony Baez, my companion in life and dialogue, who is now employed by the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Center for Urban Community Development.

Thank you Ron and Tony.

******

There are many other people who deserve acknowledgement for their part in this teacher retrospect. They are the people with whom I have grown the ideas which are explored herein. Having been my workmates, students and friends, their faces appear as a collage in my mind and so they will their names appear here: Barbarba, Violet, Willie Mae, Bao, Robbie, Lois; Dorothy, Sandy, Bronya, Juanita, Aida, Gerasimous; Dennis, John, Michael, Homer; Mary, Maria, Vicky, Marta, Sylvia, Elmer, Diana, Julia, Crystal, Tammy, Penny, Stephen, Rosa, Lynn, Madeline, Carolyn, Kelly .....

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INTRODUCTION

Voices: How to Teach, How to Transform

Our cities are becoming more racially diverse and multilingual; at the same time educational failure is growing.

As a result of the last decade's consolidated shift from an industrial to service based economy, America's urban centers have become the home of only the very rich and the very poor.

While "downtown" is the metaphor for the center of power and affluence, the left over neighborhoods which encircle their glitter -- the barrios, ghettos and old working class enclaves -- are literally and figuratively "the margins." Here the children of refugees and immigrants grow up with the great grandchildren of Black slaves and "disinherited"[1] Whites. Here, in the streets and schools of their childhoods, historic differences rooted in other places, blur as the conditions of their everyday existence press in on their youth, squeezing out dreams and defining the future as tomorrow.

In the middle of these neighborhoods, along with the churches, taverns and corner stores are the other institutions: community-based organizations (CBO's), vestiges of the

[1] This is novelist Jack Conroy's word for laboring, migrant, "have-not" Whites. His book The Disinherited bears this name.

1960s' War on Poverty; they are poorly funded but hopeful places - multi-service oases - to which people come in search of survival: food, shelter, child care, education, employment, counseling, medical care. Here, they find, information is most trustworthy and service is most humanely offered; they can come as they are and leave with their dignity. As a legacy of the Reagan years of the 1980's, the CBO's have been joined by Re-employment Centers for the long-term, usually structurally, unemployed and Homeless Shelters for the structurally-never-included.

It is in these community based institutions that I have, for the past eight years, chosen to work as a teacher of yesterday's children - adults who have decided to return to school. Most are there to complete unfinished business. Some want to get a GED so they can face tomorrow just a little more credentialed. Others have high school diplomas, but find themselves short of an education; still others, immigrants and refugees from Latin America and Asia, want to improve their English proficiency for employment or higher education. Only a few, in my experience, have really never learned to read; they are usually either older or disabled native English speakers, or non-English speaking refugees from rural areas of Central America or Southeast Asia where schools are rare or non-existent.

It is among these men and women that I have decided to teach, leaving factory assembly and hospital kitchen work behind me. I entered their neighborhoods having a familiarity with their lives, a partisan attitude about my role as teacher and predisposition towards education for social justice.

This exploration of teaching at the margins is undertaken in an effort to better understand my teaching context and articulate my teaching assumptions so that I can better educate my students, enabling them to, in the words of the 1970's poet, Habte Wolde,[2] "take their own."

In the pages that follow I invite the reader into the reflective world of my thoughts about what I call "teaching with an attitude." The moments and musings which taught me are recaptured in a retrospective dialogue - a methodology I will explain in **Chapter 1**. In doing this re-search[3] I have discovered that two voices have been struggling with each other. Having first agreed with Dewey's (1938) caution that "any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles," they have wrestled about pedagogy and philosophy.

Listening closely, I recognize one voice as that of denunciation, of a woman familiar with life in the neighborhoods and work in the factories of this city, who came of age during a decade which was kinder to the voice of conscience than the one we live in now. This is the voice which I brought to my avocation.

The other is an acquired one; it is a voice informed by the literature of educational theory which I sought out as a returning student. This is the voice which attempts to

---

[2]This is a reference to the final line of Wolde's poem, "The Children - Warriors Now and Beyond," from her chapbook Enough to Die For [Detroit, MI: Broadside Press, 1972]. The entire poem is as follows:

we watch them
and teach them
that they grow strong
with knowledge and purpose
and **they will take their own**

[3]This is a term used by A. Berthoff (1990) ["The teacher as researcher," in Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher as an agency of change, eds. D. Goswami & P.R. Stillman (Monclair, NJ: Boyton, 1987)] to literally mean "looking back at" teaching experiences.

describe, explain and postulate about "education at the margins" while standing at a safe distance from them. Within this body of theory, two theories have hegemony in current public school policy. In **Chapter 2** I will describe these as *Traditional/ Acculturationist* and *Multicultural/ Assimilationist.* They are discussed here in order to lay bare their assumptions, so that in the remaining chapters I can better contrast them with my own evolving ones.

The dialogue of **Chapter 3** recapitulates my experiences and thought processes as they have interacted with my experiences[4] across classrooms and over the years. Through a mental (and finally spoken) dialogue on philosophy and pedagogy, a third voice emerges. This is the voice of synthesis which must struggle with old words and forms of expression in order to present new knowledge -- the "theories of action" (Argyis, 1982) for teaching against marginality presented in **Chapter 4.**

I have chosen dialogue as the means for externalizing my thoughts because this is the authentic form in which the complexities of practice-embedded contradictions reveal themselves to us mentally. Dialogue, as philosophers from Plato to Dostoyevsky to Freire[5] have shown us, is also the medium through which we can ascend into the "light"[6] of knowing. Extending Plato's metaphor of the cave, this is a search, not for the

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[4]This is a reference to Dewey's twin principles of *interaction and continuity* in his 1938 publication Education and Experience in which he postulates that we learn by interacting with our experience and transfer that learning to other situations through continuity.

[5]This is a reference to Plato's dialogues of Socrates (The Republic), Ivan's dialogue with Alyosha in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, Paulo Freire's discussions with Ira Shor (A Pedagogy for Liberation), with Donaldo Macedo (Literacy: Reading the World, Reading the World), with Myles Horton (We Make the Road by Walking)

[6]Plato, in his "Allegory of the Cave" (Book VII of The Republic) writes about the search for knowledge as taking the seeker from the shadows of ignorance (animism/paganism) in the cave into the bright sun (theism).

presumed truth of the shadows and not the kind of knowledge which seduces with its apparent brilliance, but a kind of prism through which the many dimensions of the under and upper (inner and outer) world can be viewed, their contradictions resolved, in order to turn "the world of becoming into that of being .... of the good."

The chapter which follows then (Chapter 1), describes this methodol-ogy of reflection, while the starting assumptions of this teacher story are argued in Chapter 2. Through the dialogue in Chapter 3, the development of these ideas - confirmed, disputed and refined - are recounted and researched. Chapter 4 articulates the dialogue's emergent ideas about teaching socio-economically and educationally under-prepared adults. Together they constitute a reconceptualization of Multicultural Education which resolves ideological partisanship and commitment to the tenets of multiculturalism, with the principles and practices of effective teaching. These are presented as a Curriculum Against Marginality.

CHAPTER 1

Research through Retrospect and Narrational Dialogue Methods

What follows is a reconstructed chronicle of thinking about doing teaching. If there were field notes to go along with this, they would document my evolution as an adult-basic-skills-teacher/ multicultural-curriculum-writer from 1986 to the present; if I had chosen to interview my students, their transcribed statements about trying to grow up, learn and succeed in social/school environments which are hostile towards poor children in general and non-white, non-English speaking children in particular, could speak for themselves; if I had designed surveys for them to answer, I would be able to code their expectations of and experiences in what Jack Mezirow, et al. (1975) termed "last gamble" education and correlate them with demographic categories of information; if I had systematically collected, tabulated and compared outcome data, I would, through students' grade level increases, GED completion and college/job entrance rates be able to statistically demonstrate the strengths of the instructional model which I shall introduce later as "Multicultural Education Against Marginality." Together these pieces of proof could be submitted as validation or negation of one or several assumptions which frame "Multicultural Education" in current educational literature.

This, I believe, is an important task for the educational research agenda of the next part of the last decade of this century. Future research endeavors should critically evaluate Multicultural Education as it has been implemented; we have heard a lot of assertions as to how teachers, classrooms and schools should change to accommodate student diversity, but very little evidence of their efficacy as defined by student achievement or student satisfaction. Such studies would have to be longitudinal and recapitulative of various teaching/learning contexts and inclusive of student voices which could inform (Finkelstein, 1992) and even, as Lincoln (1990) suggests, co-frame the research questions and methods.

What I have chosen to do with this writing instead, is rely on my memory to tell a story which will, as Finklestein urges, focus on "public and private processes... within [a] bedrock of community life (1992, 284)." It is a story more for teachers than for researchers, but it could also be for researchers who believe with Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990, 5) that:

> ... the questions teachers ask about theory and practice ought to be the starting points for classroom inquiry; ... that teachers can and should play a central role in the creation of new knowledge about teaching and learning...

This is a story in search of new knowledge[7] wherein I re-search

---

[7]A shame (and I hope the subject of future discussion) is that this kind of knowledge -which may be more essential than that gleaned by more orthodox means is - is reduced to a rather unvalued commodity - "teacher insight" - because of how it is discovered. In the midst of what is already a highly idiosyncratic profession, knowledge which has been produced largely by women, classroom by classroom, through the use of as yet uncertified means, becomes privatized. This is reminiscent of how midwifery was quietly practiced by women and publicly relegated to witchcraft by male clergy who refused to recognize it as medicine-by-another-name.

my own experiences via retrospect through which I discover how my thoughts about pre-college instruction for socially and economically marginalized adults have developed, including:

(1) the evolution of how I understand my psycho/social teaching context - what Donmoyer (1990) has called "visceral knowledge;"[8]

(2) the development and refinement of my pedagogical and philosophical assumptions through a process of reflecting on contradictions raised: (a) by my classroom attempts at implementing multicultural education, and confirmed in educational research literature, or (b) by the literature and then proven, deepened or modified in practice; and

(3) the emergence from the insights gained through both (1) and (2) of "theories of action" for a Curriculum Against Marginality.

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[8]Donmoyer (1990, 189) uses this term to speak about the knowledge of students, patients and clients which is required of successful teachers, counselors and social workers; it is generated through an experiential process which is "not purely intellectual... often affect-laden". He quotes Isaiah Berlin who describes this kind of unprocessed understanding as "..neither (to use Professor Gilbert Ryle's useful classification) "knowing that" which the sciences provide, nor the "knowing how" which is the possession of a disposition or skill, nor the experience of direct perception, acquaintance, memory, but the type of knowledge that an administrator or politician must possess of the men with whom he deals."

Why Retrospect?

For the purpose of this project, the method of teacher story through retrospect is compelling for several reasons. Fundamentally, I am motivated by a belief that "good knowledge" should enable us to not just understand the world, but change it. With this belief comes another - namely, that this same "good knowledge" is to be found closest to the reality we seek to change, not in detached "expert opinion." In this I find myself in agreement with ethnographic and educational researchers including Finklestein (1992), Sennett & Cobb (1973), North (1987) and Rubin (1976).

Second, I have come to realize that since I have already arrived at the "theories of action" alluded to above[9], to do research in search of them would be ingenuine. Instead my purpose is to:

- externalize the process by which I have arrived at them

- describe how I have "done" Multicultural Education and provide some authentic observations about the function of class, race and culture in teaching marginalized adults, and

- begin a conversation with teachers and researchers interested in evaluating and transcending Multicultural Education as it is practiced today.

---

[9]Berthoff (1987) asserts that conscientious teachers already know what there is to know about their classrooms and that data collection is superfluous to teacher understanding. I would agree that producing data is more a tool for convincing "outsiders" than a means for teacher reflection.

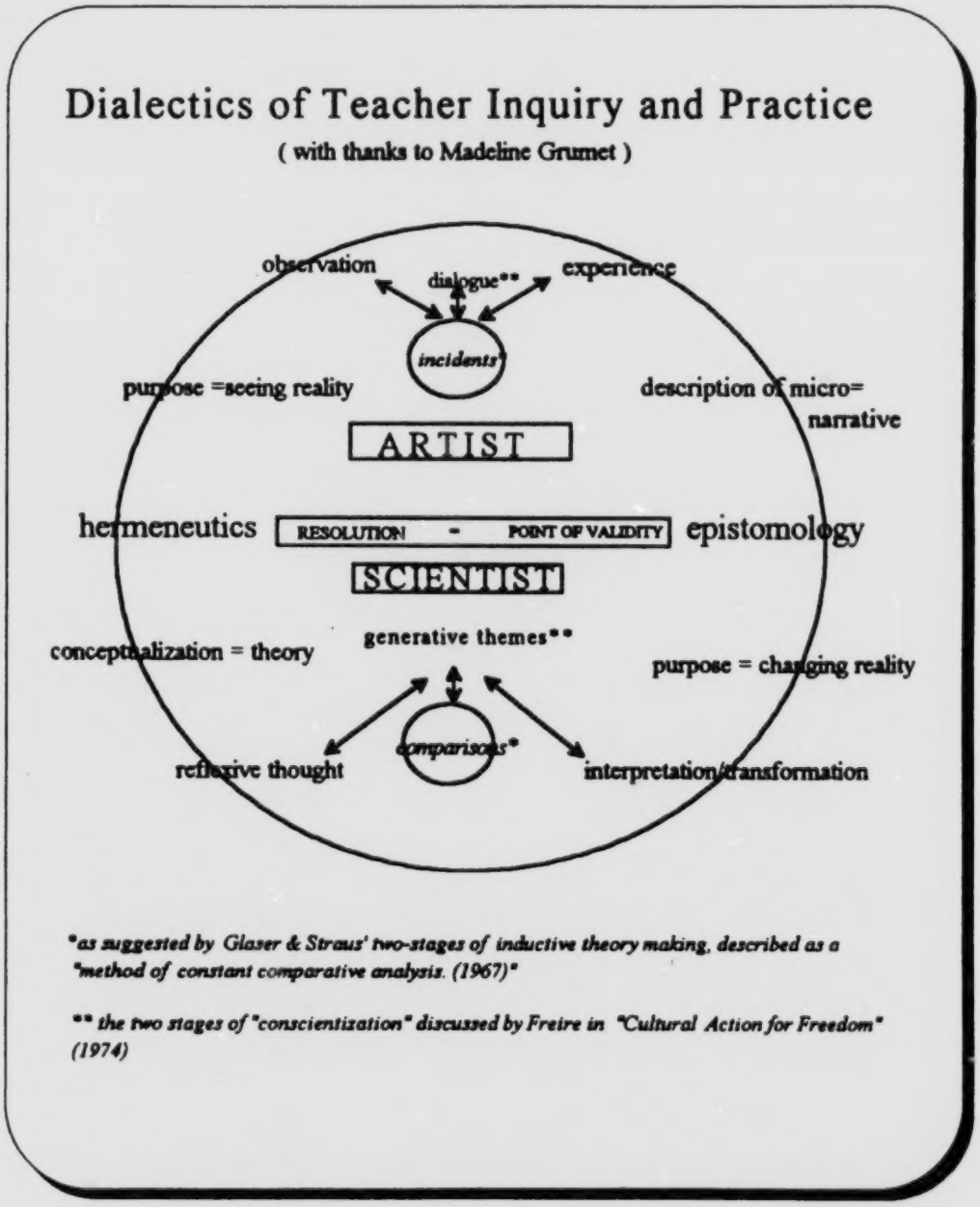
I am grateful for the prosaic prodding of Madeline Grumet (1990), whose writing about teacher research has encouraged me to reflect upon my own process of creating knowledge. Research is, as Grumet describes, an ongoing event in which teacher-as-artist observes, understands and intuits from what Geertz (1973) calls an "experience-near" position, and teacher-as-scientist places experience at a reflective distance so as to better examine the phenomena which have been observed. At the convergence of these two vantage points, reality becomes clearer and transformative possibility can be imagined. As Grumet herself (1990, 102) says:

> Neither science that denies connection, nor art that displays connection, can design the relation to the world that I struggle to achieve. For I am neither an artists nor a scientist. I am a teacher. Here is the difference. Teaching simultaneously performs the connection of art and practices the so-called abstention of science. [emphasis added]

Her paradigm of research, I have discovered, gives a language to my own process of action and reflection; I have attempted to represent this process through figure 1 [following page]. In this model hermeneutics both represents and seeks intentional/creational understanding through acting in and observing reality; it is completed and initiated through reflective thought which seeks its completion by transforming reality based on epistemology -- a process much like Freire's (1970) "conscientization", described in Cultural Action for Freedom, in which "generative themes" for critical consciousness arise from dialogic encounters and vice versa.

Research questions in this paradigm are the large and little contradictions which confront us as teachers during and at the end of both "good" and "bad" days. They

Figure 1



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become what Grumet calls the "yarn [which]...loops back and out and under again" in reflexive thought; the new knowledge which we create in this way she calls "knots," " "anchors to reality." We can also think of them as the points of validity which are so significant to researchers. Or, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990, 6) more concretely said:

> Teachers' questions... emerge from the discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs.. the result of a concern about a student's progress, a classroom routine that is floundering, conflict or tension among students, or as a desire to try out some new approach. This questioning process is highly reflexive, immediate, and referenced to particular children and classroom contexts.

A third reason for teacher-story is that as Carter (1993) explains, this medium has the ability to describe events, their details, sequence, consequence and nuance which would surely slip through almost any other form of accounting.

I became aware of the power of story as I re-listened to the cast of real and fictitious teachers whose voices, over time, became the teacher-voices in my head, whose stories became the stuff of my own aspirations, providing me with models in this profession which is otherwise acted out behind closed doors. The following is offered here as a foreword to the dialogue of Chapter 3.:

> My earliest memory of wanting to become a teacher I associate with a TV program I watched when I was no more than 10; it told the story of the New York City teachers who had lost their jobs during the McCarthy/HUAC era - one of the segments from Profiles in Courage. To Sir with Love was a movie

which I must have seen not long after in which teaching was presented as the hardest, most wonderful thing one could do - Sidney Poiter's character was as insistent about respect as scholarship. Later on, much later on, when I had a family and before I decided to return to college to become a teacher myself, there was the weekly episode of Fame which portrayed the dynamic between young talent and seasoned, caring teachers. John Voigt's enactment of the country school teacher on a South Carolina island in Conrack based on Pat Conroy's story, The Water is Wide, showed how powerful knowledge is if you believe in it powerfully enough to engage others in it - no matter who they are.

Along the way to becoming a teacher, there were, of course, books as well. The list is long but includes the following: Good Bye Mr. Chips, Jesse Stuart's The Thread that Runs So True, George Dennison's The Lives of Children which I read on the Greyhound Bus on my way to (permanently) moving to Milwaukee; Septima Clark's, Marva Collins' and John Holt's books on teaching Black American kids and grown-ups in the Deep South, Midwest and East.

The final reason for retrospective story is to document the importance of relationship in teaching. Relationship, which is constructed through the complexity of human interaction suggests themes which are better narrated than defined. As Carter (1993, 7-8) explains:

> ..the central themes [of stories] are often moral and philosophical, having more to do with feelings, purposes, images, aspirations, and personal meanings than with teaching method or curriculum structures in isolation from personal experience or biography.

The more I teach, the more I am convinced that in the very human enterprise of inviting another to learn, it is the connection of one human to another that is essential. I find verification of this, again, in my own experience:

> Ms. Simmons taught me Biology and teased me about my recessive (Aryan) genetic traits; but I remember her most because she refused to join the AFT picket lines during their strike against Ocean Hill-Brownsville parents' demands for community control of their schools. From her I learned about conviction.
>
> Mr. Gianelli, whose class I remember being late for on the day of the Viet Nam Moratorium, cynically took us through the paces of sonnet writing in High School English making sure that we understood that the "greats" had composed more for the love of money than love itself. While never so much as admonishing me for missing the first minutes of his class, he did challenge me on the inauthenticity of my own syrupy constructs. I felt affronted then, but remember his quiet support and honesty years later.

Needless to say, I had many teachers as I made my way from Kindergarten to 12th grade, but these two stand out because of how they revealed their selves to me. As

Grumet says so inimitably, they adopted "..the stance of the artist (performing their) relation to the world ... They lean(ed) on the windowsills, they long(ed) for our daffodils." (1990, 102)

Why Dialogue?

In their typology of teacher-research, the retrospect of Chapter 3 might be considered "essay" by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990). Carter (1993) would call it "story"; I call it *narrational dialogue* because, as explained earlier, it recapitulates thought processes which were evoked in relationship to different teaching contexts, over a period of time.

In their 1990 publication, We Make the Road by Walking, Paulo Freire engages Myles Horton in dialogue as a means of telling the story of both men's involvements and evolutions. He defends this method as a more authentic means of making and negotiating meaning; one which is more reflective of the dynamism through which thought and action are connected. But whether we call it essay, story or "narrational dialogue," this process of critical exploration produces a kind of knowledge which would surely escape other means of capturing: insight. Repeatedly confirmed, these insights give birth to "categories of meaning"[10] which although they can be tested, may not be discovered initially through simply deductive means.

[10]In his 1990 article on Generalizability and Single-Case Study, Donmoyer writes: "..much of the learning that develops experientially can be categorized more as meaning making than as hypothesis generation and testing." Certainly this would apply in the case of this experience-based research.

A Braid of Knowledge: Practice, Thought and Theory

In the dialogue of Chapter 3, my partner in conversation, Tony Báez, and I begin by exploring my development as a social activist within the context of the experiences of my early and formative years. Further into the dialogue, we talk about the tensions that developed between my ideological voice and my schooled voice first as I decided to return to college for teaching credentials, and later as I began to do what I had prepared for - teaching basic and pre-college skills to marginalized adults. Our conversation recounts my initial and changing assumptions about pedagogical practices, the influence and meaning of culture, the appropriateness of my own partisanship. As we speak, we call upon the voices of sympathizers from theory and fiction - others who have struggled with these same issues. Ultimately, we turn to Multicultural Education: What is it? How is it practiced? What are its assumptions and limitations? Our examination of these questions is conducted through the framework - lens, if you will - which our dialogue has crafted. At this point we struggle with old definitions and emergent meanings for transformative education.

While a set of basic questions, delineating areas "to-be-explored" generally guided our conversation, the verbal process allowed us to go back over covered ground to uncover and clarify assumed understandings. In this way, an initial text which was not constrained by the customary linearity of writing was created. Several other steps, however, were required to produce a readable, hopefully lucid, document.

Transcription transformed speech into writing allowing me the possibility of

retracing our thoughts and words. First order of business was reorganizing, eliminating rambling thoughts, removing redundancies, eliminating the kinds of ellipses and colloquialisms which are natural to spoken language, but which read awkwardly. Then, since our meaning is far more embedded in speech than in writing - "coded" among familiars according to linguists - my next task was to ensure that our "speech" was explicit while loosing none of its reflective character or voice. This required several editing sessions wherein Tony and I wrote back and forth; Tony would clarify his questions and then I would have to make sure that my responses corresponded in content, language and form.

From this exploration, via dialogue, "theories of action" emerged. These "knots" are the crossed-over meeting places where three different "ways of knowing" - belief, theory and practice - became woven together through the artist-scientist's **reflexive thought** into a cohesive whole - teacher-knowledge on teaching "at the margins."

CHAPTER 2

The Teacher Voice: A Theoretical Framework for Teaching

In their often quoted report Adult Illiteracy in the United States, researchers Carman St. John-Hunter and David Harman (1979), present profiles of educationally disadvantaged Americans which clearly demonstrate the overlapping social and economic influences which result in their marginalization. Race, Employment Status, Poverty and Education are these "overlapping spheres of disadvantage" upon which St. John-Hunter and Harman develop the following typology in order to demonstrate the correlation between proximity to the economic mainstream and educational success:

Group 1	secure economically, comfortable with mainstream institutions, self-directed because believe (and have evidence to prove) that education will "pay-off"
Group 2	less economically and personally secure, e.g. seasonally employed, underemployed, lower income/more dependents, still highly motivated to succeed in education and employment
Group 3	sporadic work record, economically marginal, approach-avoidance relationship with mainstream institutions
Group 4	"stationary poor", dependent relationship with mainstream institutions, structurally unemployed

Groups 2, 3 and 4 describe my students; their lives describe what I have called "the margins."

While national figures have estimated that there are as many as 70 million adults who are not functionally literate, in Milwaukee County estimates based on 1990 Census statistics place the number of adults who have not completed high school at 144,929 -- over 25% of the city's 25-64 age group. National trends, which persist here, indicate that these 30% of these drop-outs are Black, and 40% are Hispanic.

Locally collected statistics on the public schools are telling. The 1985 study by the Governor's Commission on the Quality of Education in the Greater Milwaukee Area[11] and the Milwaukee Urban League's 1987 study, Milwaukee Today - A Racial Gap, both report the continuance of educational neglect in Milwaukee's inner-city schools. Generally, these reports found that:

- Hispanics High School students' average GPA (on a 4 point scale) was between 1.40 and 1.67. For Blacks it was between 1.38 and 1.46. In some academic areas (e.g. math and science) the average GPA for Blacks at the high school level was below 1.0.
- There are elementary and secondary schools in the city of Milwaukee where as few as 14% of minority students score at or above the national norm in achievement tests. Generally, and on the aggregate in Milwaukee, less than

[11]This is the most comprehensive report available to date on the quality of education in Milwaukee area schools. Data was compiled on 200 schools, over 60,000 students, close to 6,000 teachers, 200 principals, and close to 5,000 parents. The report is available from the State Department of Public Instruction.

30% of Hispanics and blacks, scored above national norms on standardized tests.

- In many Milwaukee high schools, less that 12% of minority students were enrolled in advanced level math and science courses.[12]

However, as St. John-Hunter and Harman discovered, the factor that cuts across race and gender and is most determinant of their school failure is family income - a fact which has come to light time and again over several decades of study including that of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986).

Since all policy decisions - social, educational or otherwise - begin and essentially diverge from this point - the question which must be answered at this point is "why?" I answer with the following premise: educational marginality is the result of social and economic marginality and not, as is popularly held, the cause of it. While hunger, poverty-related illnesses and transiency contribute to individuals' difficulty in learning, critical social scientists including, most recently, Jonathan Kozol (1991), have helped us to understand how punitive social policy affects poor people as a class. An example is this country's less than equal school finance systems whereby school districts with a high property tax base have well supported schools compared with school districts in which most residents live in sub-standard housing, and are therefore not able to generate

[12]1990 Milwaukee Public School Reports show almost no improvement in these statistics

adequate tax dollars resulting in sub-standard buildings, instruction and services.[13]

Identity and Lived Experience

Beyond the documentable affects of this inequitable system, however, are the intangibles which come from growing up at both a physical and psychological distance from the mainstream: low life expectations, social isolation, racial segregation and discrimination. The formative events of our lives, many of which are experienced in schools, convey the messages of worthiness or worthlessness which inform our social identity for the rest of our lives.

This psycho-social setting is where we acquire language, learn its rules and social purposes, develop core values and begin to define ourselves as both individuals and group members is our culture. While our *individual class/ethnic identity* is derived from our experiences within our family, neighborhood and ethnic/cultural group, these are but part of the final equation. Our *social identity* is formed as we interact as individuals with the larger society and its culture. From this interaction we may learn how to behave as we either negotiate with, or acculturate into, that larger social sphere.

Cultural group identity is surmised as we come to understand the status of our class,

[13]Jonathan Kozol made this point in a June 1993 speech broadcast on National Public Radio in which he compared the cities of Camden, N.J. (one of the four poorest school districts in the country) and Great Neck, Long Island, saying that the children of Camden are worth $4,000 a year, while those of Great Neck are worth $16,000.

race or language/ethnic group vis a vis the dominant or "mainstream" institutions.[14] Since, in this and most societies, our economic success, which is highly correlated with academic success, determines our social and personal well-being, Ogbu (1978, 1992) considers this aspect of identity to be pivotal to school success. If racism interferes with this correlation, i.e. employment barriers exist regardless of educational attainment, then the mythical value of schooling as a "conveyor belt" to economic success, is contradicted and the motivation to engage in school learning is compromised (Tyack, 1974; Greer, 1979).

This is a perception which, for members of St. John Hunter and Harman's 3rd and 4th groups is born out by their experiences. Researchers may look at the statistics presented in The National Assessment of Educational Progress (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986) which reveal that most school children stay in the economic class of their origin and that this is particularly true for non-middle class, non-white, non-English speaking children .

Educational revisionists, such as Colin Greer, even suggest that historically there never has been a serious intent to enfranchise racial minorities via the public schools. Reviewing U.S. history of the late 1880's and early 1900's, he argues in The Great School Legend (1979, 136) that:

[14]These concepts originate from the 1990 Harvard Educational Review article "Literacy and Cultural Identity" by Bernardo M. Ferdman.

> To white immigrants, the schools held out the promise of eventual social mobility. But there was no pretense of seriously offering mobility to the blacks. The society had decreed the economic marginality of blacks. Their proper fate was to remain a reserve labor force .... The public schools might encourage them to carry, to cook, and to clean -but there was no greater promise of full economic citizenship such as was advertised by the schools for the white immigrants. The schools agreed to carry out the mandate set by the economy.

In recent decades, college open admissions and affirmative action employment policies have created greater institutional access to previously excluded categories of people, i.e. racial minorities and women. However, for the most part, inequality persists, because (1) the institutions themselves have not been transformed, negatively affecting retention of the "new comers" and (2) social/economic policy continues to largely side-step addressing the many-pronged issues connected with economic inequality.

Identity and Learning:

Reading the Word and the World[15]

Using psychological arguments, researchers (Derbyshire, 1966; Ramirez, 1973; Shannon, 1985) discuss how self-identity/self-esteem correlates with students' engagement in or resistance to learning which in turn will affect their academic success.

Fingeret (1983) argues that education can set individuals apart from the group which sustains them. This predisposition against education is reinforced when education for

[15]This is a reference to Paulo Freire's words in his discussions with Donaldo Macedo in their 1987 joint publication Reading the Word and the World.

literacy is attempted and results in "failure". At this point the individual may either internalize this failure (Steinitz & Solomon, 1986) or, rather than function "incompetently" by mainstream standards, reassert his/her membership in peer groups which do not value literacy or, as a corollary, value the individual and his/her contributions in spite of his/her lack of skills. When, as a result, large groups of people choose to devalue the educational process and skills rather than be devalued as people, a competing value system is set into motion and resistance ensues (Seitz, 1977).

Students who choose to adapt suffer a different psychic cost; Spindler (1974) explains that adaptation often requires the creation of an artificial self which knows that he/she won't be accepted but still distances themselves from their origins in order to improve their chance at various opportunities which are perceived to be better.

In addition to psychic injuries, Norman and Malicky (1986) report that marginalization can also negatively affect adults' performance of cognitive tasks because the impaired view of self they gain from their social context.

Since the last century and the beginnings of public schooling, two paradigms have been advanced for the education of poor/immigrant/working class children. One is progressivism which, over the past several decades, has been implemented as multicultural education - its goals, for who are now call "diverse students", are consistent with those of earlier progressive movements: the development of individual self-esteem, social integration and assimilation.[16] In this model, the myth of education

[16] In his 1964 publication Assimilation in American Life: The role of race, religion and national origins, Milton Gordon argues that while assimilation of ethnic/racial groups into the mainstream of American society may be a desirable goal, if it leads to the attainment of opportunities for political and economic equity with the host society. Acculturation, on the other hand, is the process whereby immigrants learn or acquire the cultural

for social mobility is intact.[17]

The second and older tradition is that of acculturation. In this model students are perceived to be deficient and in need of culture, specifically Anglo-American cultural values, among them individualism, competition and a work ethic. Assimilative goals are neither favored, not forwarded since social mobility is not desired for "these people;" education is instead presented as moral salvation for people who, because of their own failures, can hope for little else. We see curricula based on this thinking alive in most poor and working class schools today - they are remedial in substance and reproachful in their treatment of students and their families.

In the following sections these models are presented in greater depth.

Acculturationist Model

Philosophically, acculturation is based on the presumption that individuals can and should outgrow their circumstances. Individuals are thereby defined as separate from a larger reality and their success rests on the strength of their individual efforts. Acculturationists will argue that the attainment of social and economic equality

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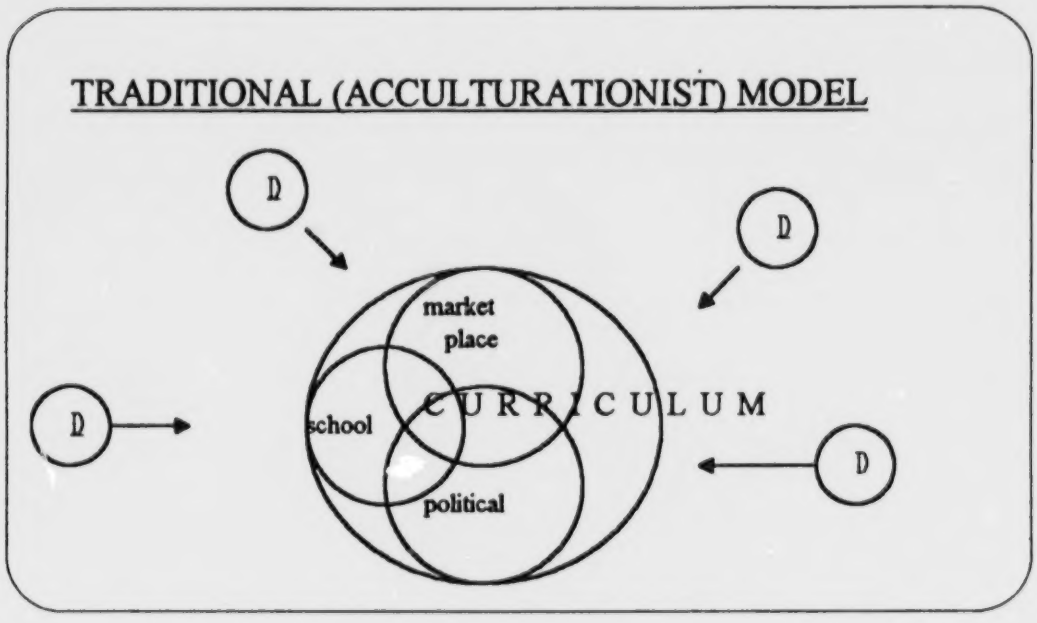
traits (language, values, behaviors and practices) of the host society without necessarily becoming structurally integrated with it. Using his analysis, the United States appears to have large ethnic/racial groups that have become acculturated, but not been assimilated. These groups tend to be minorities of "color" –such as are Blacks and Hispanic subgroups -- for whom schooling has been designed as a means of overcoming what are perceived to be negative, culturally-derived traits in favor of positive "mainstream" ones.

[17]This myth does create a certain degree of truth; this is its myth-making power. Credit for this, however, goes more to social policy - open admissions and affirmative action policies mentioned earlier - than educational or economic policy. The NAEP report findings point to the apparent fact that minority success in education and employment are still largely attributable to individuals' family/class background.

Figure 2.



D – "Spheres of Deficiency" ; ethnic, racial, linguistic and class "subgroups" living outside of the mainstream. Expectations are low for these students who are viewed as missing culture, language, skills and, even, intelligence.

There is a one-way relationship between the student and the curriculum in which the student is expected to leave their subgroup in order to "pull him(her)self up". The curriculum is designed by the interests of the school, politcal and economic establishment. It is designed to remediate students and prepare them for future employment and uncritical citizenship. There is one good curriculum which is most accessible by mainstream students . "D" students may make attempts at appproaching the mainstream but are unsuccessful; the curriculum is "not for them."

"D" students' families and communities are invisible in the curriculum and are regarded as a negative influence on their children. The relationship between school and home can be described as having a high level of dissonance.

Acculturation is the goal of education vis a vis "D" students. Being American is proposed as the source of pride.

necessitates the de-emphasizing of differences, including those derived from cultural and linguistic origins. These differences tend to be viewed as dysfunctional because they serve to separate individuals from, as opposed to blend them into, the dominant culture where it is presumed we must all want to be. In place of what we now hear called "dysfunctional" values, attitudes and behaviors, individuals who prize success are required to assume dominant societal values, including, in our society, individualism and competition [see figure 2 on the previous page].

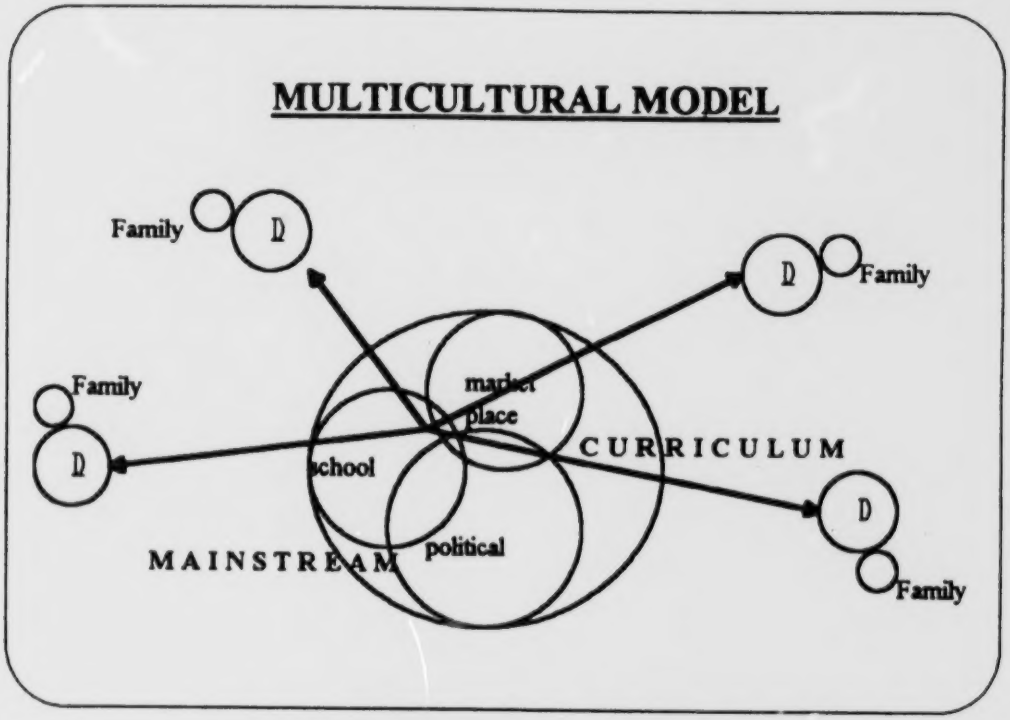
As we can see in the curricula of the many well-funded "Workplace Education" programs which the 1980's and 1990's have spawned, education is actually training designed to enable the individual worker to master the skills and attitudes prescribed as necessary by employers so that they can adeptly perform the jobs to which they have been assigned/ascribed by class society (Willis, 1977).

Multicultural/Pluralistic Model

Opposed to the acculturationist model is the multicultural or pluralist model. Its philosophical premise is that education is indeed the means for advancement of the individual and, eventually, the group; it concedes, however, that individuals' goals are negatively impacted by both an internalized sense of worthlessness as well as by the active race and class-based hostility of the larger - "mainstream" - society.

There are several variations of this model presented in figure 3 [following page]. For "mainstream students" a multicultural curriculum provides "students with cultural and

Figure 3.



D = spheres of Diversity" by which students are defined according to their membership/origins in culturally, linguistically or racially different groups. Socio-economic status is not a factor of differentness in this model.

While the curriculum remains basically intact, it reaches out at points to connect with students' diversity; this is a pluralist modification wherein the "one-good curriculum" has breaks in it in order to accomodate student diversity. Students from subgroups" meet at this point of intersection in the curriculum wherein unity is based on their being non-white and/or Limited English Proficient Culture is seen as exotic property of each (different) group. Cultural attributes are viewed as inherent and static. Differentiation in culture-of-origin, parents' culture, and child's experiences in interaction with the mainstream are not made.

The curriculum reaches out to the students in order to act upon them. Family is acknowledged, but the student approaches the school as an individual with degrees of deficit thinking ranging from an almost "missionary-type" evangelism to the belief that "multicultural sensitivity is a requirement for 'these kids' to want to learn."

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ethnic alternatives," and reduces "ethnic encapsulation" while developing "cross-cultural competency" (Banks, 1981). The best of these recognize the importance of challenging the Anglo-American reference points which have existed, unquestioned, in most content area instruction (Cheng, Brizendine & Oakes 1981).

For "diverse students", defined as non-white, these educational programs offer instruction using ethnocentric content in order to make the learning of subjects such as literature, history and science more meaningful and therefore more motivating (Banks, 1981). As an instructional goal, the concept of racial/cultural identity is introduced and developed through the use of socio-religious texts, literature/ folklore, and/or historical content in the curriculum. Philosophically this model of multicultural education is committed to the view that each culture must define its educational agenda with the preservation of cultural identity and group membership as a pre-eminent concern. Advocates for ethnocentric education assert that through this process of affirmation and discovery, group members regain not just pride in their group, but in themselves. The notion that non-white groups are inherently deficient is implicitly and explicitly rejected, as is the view that to attain equal social and economic access one must either reject one's culture and language or cease to culturally exist.

Multicultural models of education emphasize (1) that effective participation in a culturally diverse society such as the U.S. is enhanced by the maintenance of traditional ethnic/racial cultural values and practices and one's native language, and (2) that the use of culturally familiar and/or relevant artifacts, symbols, history, practices and language not only accelerate learning but send a message that "more than one kind of cultural

content is worthy of knowing in a pluralistic country and world" (Gay, 1988), are supported by rationale developed by two separate disciplines:

- Cognitive theory argues that new learning [the development of skills and knowledge] occurs as we attach new information to old, proceeding from the familiar towards the unknown; that what we have experienced directly or indirectly, constitutes our schema through which we gain an understanding of what we do not yet know.

- Psychological/Anthropological studies provide information which correlates knowledge acquisition with the social usefulness [importance and relevance] of the skills and/or knowledge; we learn according to our need to know, given the context in which we interact with the world.

These, then, are the models, the theories which informed my thinking as I began what I called at the time "adult literacy teaching." For a brief while, this was the voice that, by virtue of its presumed authority, seemed to speak louder and clearer than that other one which had spoken last on shop floors, picket lines and newsletter pages. But as other noises - the familiar and new static of the "margins", like a cacophony of "buts" became audible. The other tongue loosened and re-entered my mental discourse on teaching. New knowledge was being created because new knowledge was what I needed. Critical reflection through mental dialogue - recapitulated in the following pages - brought the voices together.

CHAPTER 3

The Conversation: A Dialogue on Education and Marginality

(Eva Mack and Tony Báez)

In 1989, I was hired by Tony Báez, then Associate Dean in charge of Basic Skills Programs at Milwaukee Area Technical College, as the consultant to the Multicultural Curriculum Project. During the year and a half it took to complete the first draft of this document we began sharing our observations on practice and theory, often as we reflected on personal political histories.

While the focus of this particular dialogue, recorded early during the summer of 1993, is on my thought processes and developing/changing assumptions, it represents the subject of many conversations which Tony and I have had over the past four years during which we have explored our mutual concerns: multicultural education, transformative education and effective teaching of minority/marginalized students.

Tony One of the underlying premises of your reflections up until this point is that one's outlook is shaped by the dynamic of experiencing, observing and thinking about reality. How would you say that your experiences

during and after your early formative years, including your later academic work, led to your decision to enter teaching?

Eva Well, I am fortunate to have parents who believe in social justice. Through their example, I grew up knowing that dissent was not just a right, but a duty.

I came of age during a time when young people, unlike today, felt a lot of power - a power that we were not only willing, but wanting, to share with other people. This was the 1960's. Perhaps we were presumptuous to think that we could in our lifetime help to bring about a measure of social justice. There was an urgency about these convictions that we felt which led, in my case, to leaving college after 2-1/2 years.

While in school I had gotten involved with an OEO (Office of Economic Opportunity) rural organizing project in upper Appalachia through which I began visiting a small crossroads community called "Buffalo Hill". I found myself there - physically and mentally - more than in class and ultimately realized that maybe that's really where I needed to be at that particular time. I was also struggling with the idea of education providing unfair advantages and, in a 19 year old way, did not want to be complicit with this system.

Tony So by that point in your life you had acquired a social consciousness formed, at least partially, by the times.

Eva Definitely. We are all a product of our temporal context, but at the same time there was something, I realized, that separated me from many of my contemporaries. I guess I like to think of it as connection to people: that I did not want to be **talking at people** - that real conversation only happens when people **talk together**. I have my father to thank for that. Everyone is the same to him; he engages people as people, but never talks down to anyone. Another way in which my perspective was different was how it was shaped. I did not come into "the movement", as we called it, by means of political theory. I only read books later on. I really came at it from a moral standpoint; I was brought up as a Quaker.

I remember vividly the night that I was visiting "Dolly" - one of my new friends who lived on Buffalo Hill - and we learned that the infant daughter of her mixed-race child had died in the hospital because she had been left unattended while she suffocated on her own vomit; she was two weeks old. There was something that happened in me that night -- I knew then that there was nothing that I, as an individual, could do about their poverty, that there was something much bigger and much more sinister, something I did not have a word for then, but do now - capitalism. It was like something snapped (or fused?) that helped me to connect the many

experiences that I had shared with the people in this neglected, marginalized community in central New York State. I needed to find out what was going on: Why were certain groups of people treated differently than others? If people don't create their own poverty (which I had become empirically convinced of by then), then who or what did? Why was it so hard to escape?

So while the times gave me an ambient in which to start this intellectual search, the questions came from the heart.

Tony Had you personally experienced poverty?

Eva I had not experienced poverty, but I had an awareness and early concern. I grew up with my father's stories and values which came from the Depression. We lived in a working class neighborhood - mostly civil servants, first generation Americans. My parents were artists which meant that the walls in our house looked a lot better off than their monthly bank statement.

Growing up in New York City, I knew about tenements and homelessness. My mother was involved in what was probably one of the earliest efforts against homelessness in The Bowery. I had read about rural poverty starting in about 7th or 8th grade when I picked up a copy of Michael Harrington's The Other America at one of those school book sales. By

high school, I had decided that I wanted to do education or social work among migrants or American Indians. But it was later on, on Buffalo Hill, that I really learned about rural poverty through immersing myself in the life of that community.

Tony So your formative years helped you to make explicit some moral kinds of beliefs which evolved from your family context, your community context and your OEO experience. What drove you to want to work in the kinds of settings you describe?

Eva I wanted to make a difference. But I have to say that I was not unique. The young activists of the early 70's really felt that we could make a difference; "idealism" had not yet become a dirty word. The only question was a preoccupying one --- "How?" I think that the first maybe 15 years of my adult life were spent in trying to figure that out.

Tony So you evolved out of an historical moment; your social consciousness developed in a manner which put you in touch with your heart and your mind and both of them at the service of a social movement. What happened then with your academic formation?

Eva Well, I didn't resume my education for another 10 years. After I dropped out of school, I worked for OEO for about a year, then took a job in a non-union factory kitchen. I tried to change that, but inexperience won out and I was fired. At that point I decided that I wanted to move to a larger city - away from a university community. I ended up in Milwaukee.

After the $325 I had saved up was spent, I had to go look for work. I found a job working in a hospital kitchen. My home was a make-shift upper flat in a poor to working class neighborhood on the west side of Milwaukee. I became involved in my union as a steward and spent many, many hours on the job and after work with the people I worked with - predominantly black women. I spent many hours in their neighborhoods, their homes and taverns. I found a resilience and a generosity there that has stayed with me.

After 4 years of fixing patient trays and trying to bring some democracy to our union, I got a higher paying job in a factory where I ended up working for the next 7 years. I fully expected that I would be there for maybe 14 or 21 more years. So, aside from earning a living, I once again began doing what anyone with a consciousness would do ...

Tony But unions do not seem to have been the first organizations in which you participated. Right? Participation in radical organizations of the 70's, organizations that had grown out of the civil rights, labor and anti-

war/anti-imperialist movements of the 60's, constituted an important educational element in many people's lives. There was learning that happened in those organizations which, whether positive or negative, contributed to one's growth. How did your participation in these kinds of organizations shape the outlook you brought to these jobs?

Eva They were adult schools: we studied political theory with an academic's rigor and partisan's passion. I learned how to analyze, I learned how to think. This was when I first learned that there was a way of looking at the world called dialectical and historical materialism which became the screen through which I continue to interpret events. The other great thing was that they taught discipline. My days, thoughts and priorities were organized around "the higher good." It strikes me that this experience must be very similar to that of a religious novitiate.

Tony This is an important point. It has been said that political organizations replaced traditional colleges for many of the push outs from universities and colleges of the late 60's and 70's, especially those of us who had left because of issues of consciousness. So, if you were active politically throughout these years, you were not absent of intellectual experience?

Eva No, not at all. In fact, when I think about it, I wasn't even absent of teaching experience. I date my experience in adult education right back my union involvement: in committees, as editor of our local newspaper or as steward. This was, in fact, adult education.

Tony And academic preparation for yourself?

Eva Yes, absolutely. But I think another interesting point about the organizations of the 70's is that instead of sitting and listening to professors, to a large extent we were listening to young men who could have been their sons, the leaders of those organizations... they brought the same class biases, same arrogance, into those political organizations through which we hoped to effect change. As a result, our thinking and style of work, without meaning to, often became inaccessible, and even disrespectful of working people.

Another question, then, that I was left with from that time was, "How does consciousness which, oftentimes comes from outside of the poor and working classes, make connections with those communities?"

Tony You are talking about a historical moment in which participants and organizations, whether we look at them now as authentic or not, were at least trying to accomplish change, operating in a manner in which partici-

pants had to look at themselves as possible teachers, as agents of change. Anybody who thinks of him or herself as an agent of change, who wants to teach, or wants to help people to acquire the skills, knowledge and awareness needed to also become an agent of change, is a teacher.

Eva Yes, exactly. For me personally, it was the reading that I did during that time that ultimately helped me find my way into teaching. It enabled me to meet real and fictitious characters who became models, voices of conscience, if you will; they helped me to go to work everyday believing that my courage and clarity could make a difference. The fictitious characters, especially, were exemplary human beings - their humanity shined, their conviction was remarkable. I am thinking of the characters in Upton Sinclair's The Jungle, Agnes Medley's Daughter of the Earth, John Steinbeck's In Dubious Battle, Freedom Road by Howard Fast. They and a cast of others were created to tell the untold history and cry the injustices which had been perpetrated on American working people. Their larger-than-life lives conveyed a message, a story [You see, I've always believed in the power of story.] that I wanted so much to be able to share with the people with whom I worked. I truly believed that if they could connect with these same people - hear their voices and ideas - something different would happen inside of them as well.

So, to some extent, my decision to go into teaching - your original

point - while strongly motivated by the idea of teaching for social justice, was also connected to this passion for the words and stories of denunciation that had sustained me, helped me to reach out from where I was to a place which was at once familiar and removed.

Tony Yet, the books that you read were not often written by people from the working class; they were authored by intellectuals and writers that came from a class quite different and distant from the subjects of their books.

This is just one of the many contradictions which, I suppose, were explored within those organizations and in your own mind.

Eva Yes, as I mentioned earlier, this was a question which I kept probing. In our organization, our discussions [and differences] always seemed to get back to the philosophical question of the relationship between consciousness and material conditions.

In the case of much of the proletarian literature of the early 1900's, you are right; they were frequently the products of men and women who knew about, but did not necessarily share, the life conditions of the people about whom they wrote. Nonetheless, their empathy and artistic struggle to be authentic effectively created the bridges across whatever socio-economic, experiential chasms not-of-their-making, existed. They used their language to speak for voiceless people.

Sometimes distance is actually useful. Ira Shor, for example, in his book Critical Teaching and Everyday Life talks about the importance of stepping back from the ordinary in order to be able to objectify the everyday and thereby see it better.

Tony

Myles Horton, in dialogue with Paulo Freire, says that in the formative years of Highlander one of the most difficult decisions they had to make revolved around whether their organizational focus would be to create organizers that were going to change the world, or to provide an educational alternative to mountain people, many of them indigenous organizers in their own right. They decided that their primary purpose would not be to change the world but to help create a consciousness, a morality if you may, for social justice. They resolved also to devote their resources to creating access to the knowledge - both that which exists and that which could be created through the praxis - that would develop activists into politicized human beings who could then make choices about the direction of and their role in social change.

I am wondering, how have you answered this question for yourself?

Eva

I'm really glad you brought that up; I remember clearly the day when I finally said to myself, "Eva, you're not an organizer, you're an educator." I had learned the hard way that I was not a good tactician, that I see things

almost too holistically, too critically. I had run for vice president of our union at Master Lock and been very honest and open during the campaign; I had run on a platform of union democracy, equality in the membership and a strong posture towards the company... everything you would think people would want. In spite of this, I lost pretty poorly, forcing me to think about why. Union politics, I decided, was not necessarily about fairness or honesty, but saying the right things at the right moment with the right amount of bravado - tactics. That left me out.

It was on that same day that I decided I was going to go back to school after having been gone for 10 years. I knew then that what I wanted to do was to help people to see the whole and to search for the truth about their lives. I don't want to sound patronizing or condescending in anyway, but we can only make choices from the choices that we know that we have. What education should do is stretch how we view our choices. That was what I saw my role as being.

Tony

You are not alone. During the 60's and 70's, people like myself, developed intellectually in the political organizations of ethnic minority communities like the Young Lords, the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets, etc. From there we went in several directions. Some of us went from being "organizers" to "educators."

Many of those that continued to think of themselves as organizers

ended up, ironically, in the political parties and organizations that we were then fighting, those "parties" which we had argued were not representative of the people. Those of us who pulled out of that process and became educators were individuals who struggled with the burdensome moral questions of society. We struggled as well with the moral dilemma of how to become useful - how to enable people to change, if not initially their reality, at least their consciousness.

What became clear to some of us is that you don't empower people to change their reality when you manipulate them to think as you do.

For example, educator Bob Moses went to Mississippi as a politician but gradually - over time - became a first-rate educator. Now he speaks of having to make the decision not to be an organizer any longer. Rather than register people to vote in order to help certain political organizations to meet their goals, Moses works to prepare young people to learn, hoping that they will eventually re-frame the political agenda.

How did you struggle with these moral questions, and how did your experiences while organizing in various workplaces shape your decision to become a teacher.

Eva The moral issue that was preeminent for me had to do with respect for people. You see, people who believe they can manipulate others really have no respect for them - neither their intelligence, their morality nor

their circumstances. They become playing pieces in a game the organizers play until they get tired of playing, which most do. I felt that the opportunities I had had to learn - the academic, reflective and life experiences - had to be shared with people who, by reason of the lack of access their socio-economic status grants them, had not had those same opportunities. This was imperative in order that together we could demand greater equality of opportunity for future generations.

Another thing which you made me think of is that in the 70's many of the organizations had studied Mao Tse Tung; one of the most important things that we took from Mao's teaching was the practice of "criticism and self-criticism". I took this pretty seriously, starting perhaps a habit of reflecting on my practice - whether on the assembly line or in the classroom. Simply put, Mao's teaching says that there's nothing that can't be improved. And since the goal of improving our practice is not (or should not) be to make yourself look better but to do better work - in the case of a teacher, to teach better - this took on moral overtones.

Tony Were there other things that happened during that period of time, that caused you to continue to think along these lines?

Eva All of these experiences of living and working very closely with marginalized people created a familiarity, at times an intimacy, that left me

knowing that adults like me, that working class people, that people of other racial backgrounds, had the ability to learn what they felt they needed to, when they needed to know it. I knew from both experience and faith that we are all very capable people too often suffering from lack of opportunity.

During these years I began to develop what Donmoyer calls "visceral knowledge" - that is the knowledge that allows you to "read people." Because of it you know when something is working in the classroom and when something isn't. You can vividly imagine the home situation of students. You know the struggles that they go through with themselves, their self-image. You feel their indignation at the individuals and institutions that have dominated and tried to destroy their lives. This knowing comes to you from your gut - viscerally - and from subjecting what you observe to a process of thinking about the observation. In this reflective process it is important to remember that most action is reaction, and intention is often guided by false consciousness.

Tony So, there was an early voice of denunciation, a voice informed by the ideology of the times that was saying, "I'm seeing things here that are wrong." And, there was a voice that came from experience, from immersion and observation that allows you now to sit here and say, "I have something like a gut sense of knowing."

Eva Let me just add that part of the "knowing" comes from actually sharing: as someone who's given birth to and is raising children, as someone whose lived in neighborhoods that are falling apart, as someone who has lived from paycheck to paycheck, as someone who has returned to college very much with an attitude of resistance, as a woman who understands what it is to be vulnerable to men, pulled by our duty to fulfill many roles and affronted by sexism in society. Yes, I am a teacher and in my classroom that makes me different, but I am all of the above and, ironically, those are the things that connect me. Together this makes me a person who has had an opportunity to receive an education and get beyond some of these things, but our common experiences are significant equalizers.

I think my students pick up on this very quickly. By the time they're done with an orientation, maybe a first class, they know that I'm not there to make them feel bad about themselves, that they can expect respect, concern and empathy from me.

Tony Experience made you more authentic?

Eva I suppose. I know I can speak to them from experiences that we've shared.

Tony — But those very same experiences also led you to return to college - an activity necessary to allow you to acquire the credentials that put you in the classroom. In order to get into a formal classroom setting where you could teach adults, you had to complete your collegiate experience.

Eva — Right. When I said I went back to school with an attitude, it was an attitude of resistance. I remember sitting in the very back of the classroom in my first class back in college. I remember pulling my union jacket around me - part emblem, part shield - defensively folding my arms in front of me. You know 10 years can be a long time. I hadn't left the University on very good terms, so even though I had been involved in intellectual work, the university, by that time, did feel a little strange to me.

In spite of this resistance, I felt that I needed to learn whatever I could so that I could become an effective teacher - technically speaking. So I started taking courses and forming my curriculum in order to develop my teaching skills. In many of the courses I found methodology divorced from perspective and taught with an authoritative voice that was kind of seductive. So much so that later, when I first began teaching, I remember measuring myself against those teachings and not feeling "professional", that is not a practitioner of the objective and detached teaching methods which I had been taught. I did not understand yet the proper place of

partisanship in teaching.

Tony — But your experiences also served as a protective shield against that feeling of failure, didn't they?

Eva — Yes, but that "professional voice" was still noisy and I did not yet have another voice which could synthesize it with my other, political, voice. On the one hand, I thought that maybe my ideology should not be in the classroom. And on the other hand, I kept asking myself why I was even there if I wasn't going to use that voice. So, the 8 years that I've been teaching has been a process of, if not resolving that dissonance, finding a louder third voice.

Tony — My progressive political experiences helped me to recognize that seductive authoritarian tone. They also helped me shape the meaning of my renewed collegiate engagement once I was back in school. It helped shaped the papers I wrote, the themes I focused on, the books I read and the manner in which I planned my course work. Did this happen with you?

Eva — Very early in my college program I did field work. I knew I had to become familiar with my future work context. So, I interned at United

Migrant Opportunities Services - my first formal experience with teaching under-prepared adults, many of whom were also learning English. This became an invaluable real world reference point for future classes.

As one of my projects I began meeting with people in different community based organizations and suggested that we come together in a conference for adult literacy workers.

Tony This is an important point that you make about your formation during your renewed collegiate experience - your participation in college was not passive; it was involved and proactive and designed to accomplish change. You were not a typical student. Rather, you defined your own academic project and you used what you were learning to continue in change "activity". Am I understanding you correctly?

Eva Yes. Actually I think that all pre-service education for teachers should involve a lot of opportunities for students to engage with the community, with classrooms, with other teachers. Helping to develop the mental hooks - the schema -to which we attach new information, facilitating learning just makes good educational sense. It also stimulates involvement, creating purposefulness - another educational axiom.

Tony The teacher, as we have learned from experience throughout the world, has to recognize that he or she can not just teach skills and thinking; effective teachers must also reflect on their students' reality and their own practice. You obviously entered college with an attitude that empowered you to shape your own education in accordance with the level of consciousness and maturity that you had already reached, which understood the centrality of ideology, and valued both experiential and learned academic knowledge.

Eva That's true but the synthesis of these two, if indeed there was one at that time, was more a voice of criticism based very securely on what I knew about the reality of my students. I could instinctively do or say the right thing, but I could not articulate my reasons for doing so.

Tony O.K. So you had reached a point in the formation of your consciousness where you felt certain of some things through a "sense of knowing", "a gut feeling" that today shapes how you interact with those whom you teach. Is that the case?

Eva Yes, I'd say so but not without seeking out the writings of radical educators, educators who were also social critics --

Tony That validated some of your thinking?

Eva That validated my thinking. Right. I found very often that I had sort of an intuitive feeling about something which I could trust based on observations I had made but knew that I needed more than a gut reaction to go on. I wanted to be able to articulate and, to an extent generalize, these "findings" if you will. Little by little I was able to cite a different kind of literature as well as provide illustrations of what that theory spoke about.

One of the first books I read was Jonathan Kozol's, Prisoners of Silence. As always his book was both prosaic and polemical. He referred to the Cuban literacy movement and the literacy movement in Nicaragua. One of the things that Kozol wrote about was the importance of emotional vocabulary - that in trying to engage students, you must use ideas and words that will have some evocative power for them. He called these "dangerous words." He also called for a national literacy campaign similar to the Cuban and Nicaraguan experience and I thought that was tremendously bold and right.

I had read Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed years before, but now felt the necessity to re-read and really understand it.

Another very important book was Carman St. John Hunter and David Harman's book, Adult Illiteracy in the United States, a report to the Ford

Foundation. This was a very exhaustive and politically informed study of the estimated 60 million adults which U.S. Census data suggested were unschooled - we assume, illiterate. Their finding resonated with me for a couple of reasons. First of all, their work went a long way to connecting human beings to the statistics. They had developed a kind of typology of the people they were studying. From my experiences, I could put faces to their categories. Secondly, a premise of their recommendations which were appended to the report was that community development must be tied to community education. Both tied together everything that I had "known" up until that point.

So, again there was this dynamic between the books I chose to read and the experiences that I had that proved one another to be true.

Tony You seem to have read books which, by and large, are a part of a literature of indignation, a literature of denunciation, that tend to echo the perspective you had developed during your formative years as an activist.

Eva That's right. They were partisan. They took sides.

Tony Freire suggests that consciousness is acquired through direct experience, as a result of observing others'. You developed an indignation which enabled you to approach your teaching with a kind of "knowing" that is

hard to support with empirical evidence. Nonetheless, this voice of truth contributes incredibly to the formation of the best teachers. Teachers who use their own partisanship to give voice to students' indignation; they speak with passion, allowing others to do the same; they search for the truth and engage others as equals in their quest.

You must know that other educators would contend that ideology has no place in teaching. How do you respond?

Eva

I would say that all schooling is done from an ideological perspective, although most of the time that perspective serves the self interests of only a small minority of students, who find their reality represented in the curriculum and their goals synonymous with the schools'. I believe that people like myself are more honest because of our partisanship which is based in inclusive and democratic ideals; we are evening the scales.

When I express my opinion, I don't expect my students to agree. I think of myself as providing an alternate view which may resonate with their experience. I don't believe in proselytizing. Anyone can have any opinion they want in my classroom, so can I.

This is where knowing your students becomes really important. It enables you to know where to begin - how an issue in the community or a life experience is connected to a piece of literature or historical event.

Pedagogy is also critical. Usually the beginning of a semester and the

end of the semester in my classroom look very different. In the beginning there is a lot of "teacher talk". I organize the curriculum so that students can learn content first through a fairly traditional/didactic way of teaching. But little by little I turn into more of a coach as their time is spent in individual projects which spin off from our group exploration. Again, this approach has evolved as I rejected skills-based, individualized instruction, but was provided with a theoretical base when I picked up Mortimer Adler's Paideia Proposal in which I found a very similar approach being advanced by him. This is certainly the way that young people in the high schools of the suburbs of the United States are taught. If it's good enough for them, it has to be good enough for returning adult students.

Tony

It's important to point out that Mortimer Adler's conception of good teaching included the notion of the existence of an organized body of knowledge which needs to be taught. This does not mean that knowledge does not evolve from people's reflection on that body of knowledge. He also suggested that the didactic teaching of that body of knowledge required "coaching" as the means for leading students into a process of internalizing that knowledge. The third element of Adler's proposal involves the critical assessment of knowledge explored through Socractic dialogue. This last element is most consistent with the pedagogy of Freire, Kozol and others... about which you also have alluded to.

In your teaching experience, how much weight have you given to that element of good teaching?

Eva Well, I believe that in order to engage in the kind of dialogue which is the aim of good teaching, all parties must enter the conversation with a common knowledge base, taught, didactically if necessary. This requires time and a culture of inquiry which is developed over time and through relationship. Of course, from day one you must begin building that culture so that content will be learned. We must, however, always remember that best intentions don't lead to knowledge acquisition - relevance and meaning do. We must help students with this negotiation.

Tony Two concepts you have spoken about are relationship and the importance of meaning. Michelle Fine speaks about these when she says that we need to undo the practice of "silencing" by creating opportunities for students to express and understand their own condition. She goes on to say that those who are going to work with marginalized populations should reveal their own indignation - another concept you have forwarded. In doing so, Fine argues the teacher becomes an advocate. Is this how you see yourself?

Eva Yes. I've always seen myself as an advocate, even though there were earlier points at which I questioned how appropriate this was. I did not have a clear way of defending this behavior as part of effective teaching. You know, teachers get pulled in a lot of directions: by our colleagues, by our employers, by those voices from schools of education. But the teacher who wants to make a difference has to decide if he or she is going to be for students or against them; that seems pretty simplistic, but that is exactly how our students see it.

Of course, being "for your students" doesn't mean applauding everything that they do. It means advocating on their behalf; it is an attitude which comes through in an organized way through the curriculum, by developing meaningful activities around generative themes. But sometimes, it's a lot less formal - in moments before or after class, at home, at night. Sometimes it means confronting institutions, sometimes it means confronting the student. As I said earlier, it's the relationship with students as other adults, as other women - the visceral understanding - that makes this possible.

Beyond the teacher-student relationship, and perhaps more significant at times, are the relationships developed among students. This happens spontaneously and should be promoted by the teacher and the school towards what Wehlage, in his book Reducing the Risk: Schools as Communities of Support, calls the social bonding of "school membership".

Our classrooms are part school, part lifeboat; it is impossible to separate the affective from the cognitive. As Fine suggests, our classrooms must become places where students can speak truly about what is truly happening in their lives.

Tony — You are trying to be different from traditional educators; you want to break with what Freire and others have called "banking education," while recognizing the importance of developing your students' knowledge base so that they have something from which they can draw, reflect and act. As you're doing so, you yourself seem to be participating in that exploration as well because as you teach you are critically examining your own practice on an ongoing basis. This exploration and self-critique has enabled you to evolve in your views about both teaching methodologies and content as they relate to teaching diverse and multicultural populations. Can you describe how your thinking on multicultural education has evolved?

Eva — Well let me do a little background here. Frankly, when I began teaching, I sort of took the idea of multiculturalism for granted. I mean, I knew that my students would be largely non-white, working class and poor and, in this sense, not different from my organizing or work experiences. I was familiar with their lives, knew that I shared common refer-

ence points from which to teach and perceived myself as non-threatening. The formula was simple: be human, be genuine, relate. So that's what I did.

My first teaching experience was back in a factory. I had been asked to go teach in a UAW reemployment center because I myself had been a member of the Automobile Workers Union. There, most of my students were white males who had been permanently laid off from the only job they'd ever known. Their culture was one based on work and what was left after the 8-10 hour day. I was familiar with their work experiences and sympathetic to their situation. They could talk about the machines they worked on and I knew what they were talking about. We all knew what oil mist smells like, what it was like to wear safety glasses on a hot, sweaty day and be forced to work overtime on days that should be spent with your family. Now, when I wonder how they would have completed the blank in "I am _____ (or a similar statement which gets at culture and identity), I think they would have identified themselves based on gender more than ethnicity, even though they may have been Polish, German or Irish. The few who were Black would have attached this identifier in an almost hyphenated way to "male." They would have supplied their job title: ".. a welder" ".. a machinist" " ..a damn good toolmaker." They may have said "veteran" or "drag racer" - revealing history and/or hobby. Some may have said "father" or "husband", but I

doubt that these would have come to mind first.

My second job was teaching GED in a daytime center for homeless people. Most of the people who came to the "Drop-in -Center" were black males between the ages of 20 and 45, but there also were a number of white men. There were both black and white women, but regardless of race they were in the minority. I'm guessing that most of them would have completed the blank with psychological or racial descriptors. What was most significant to them was the fact that they had no home, they had no job, they use or used alcohol or drugs. More than anything they would have said something that revealed their very low self-esteem. Their culture was one of their common condition, not different backgrounds.

Next, I worked at Journey House, a community organization in the economically struggling near southside of Milwaukee - an area that was traditionally Polish, but these days home to growing numbers of Latinos, Native Americans, Southeast Asians and Blacks, as well. Here the concept of "culture" took an interesting twist. I began to notice that many of my students, white females who had grown up in that neighborhood, had Latino or Native American boyfriends and partners. "What's going on here?" I wondered. I am conjecturing again, but if I had asked them to complete the same "I am _____" statement, I think they would have said "a woman", "a mother", "on welfare". I doubt that any would have mentioned the nationality of their grandparents - in the midst of everything

else, this was like a non-issue. What was perhaps an unspoken issue was that something was missing for them -the kind of belonging which practiced culture can provide... which they were finding with their men and in the families of the men that they chose to be with. They found relationship, connection.

The other thing I began noticing was how terribly, terribly low their self-esteem was. I would wager lower, if you could possibly measure self-esteem, than either the Hispanics or the American Indian or the few blacks that were in the class. Again I had to hypothesize about "why." You know, white people in our society expect to succeed, at least to be preferentially hired - that's how it goes theoretically. What follows from this is that if they hadn't, they must somehow be at fault. In our society, we recognize differences based on ethnicity, language and race, but the absence of class consciousness in our society leaves poor whites feeling simply like "loosers" - there is no other explanation for their condition.

By the time I began working on researching and writing the "Multicultural Curriculum for Basic Skills" at MATC, I knew that we needed to address race and ethnicity, but also class, as culturally identifying issues. A premise of the curriculum and my current thinking is that positive identity leads to learning; it is the romanticized view of how culture based on ethnicity contributes to school achievement which I have revisited over time. At this point, I would say that what is most central to identity

formation is one's relationship to the mainstream and its institutions - a relationship which is primarily economic but mitigated by racial as well as ethnic/language factors.

Tony Let me interrupt and try to understand how your references to the MATC curriculum connect into this discussion. You've told us up until now about your work experiences and how you began to teach in various settings and with various populations. You told us how you were able to bring your own background into your teaching, informing how you looked critically at what you were doing as a teacher. When you came to MATC you were asked to participate in a process of developing a document to guide the implementation of something called multi-cultural education. Surely, some assumptions had already been made by people at MATC which were somewhat consistent with your thinking - that class and culture were factors which could not be ignored in the process of teaching under-prepared populations. During your involvement with MATC's curriculum, you developed an understanding that these issues could not just be dealt with by drawing from a romantic concept of multicultural education: something pretty, but not necessarily substantial. How did this experience of writing, researching and critical reflection help you to further articulate or make clearer in your mind your position on multicultural education?

Eva Actually, the committee that began working on the document really didn't talk about this much. The emphasis was on finding ways to be sensitive to/ inclusive of "multicultural" students. A few of us found that "multicultural teaching" lead us to rediscover a literature which had been unacknowledged, history which had been excluded and territories of the world which had been assumed to be barren of knowledge. Multicultural teaching gave us new texts and new means for making meaningful connections with students.

Tony So it was more than just cultural sensitivity that you were after?

Eva Right. The real question seemed to be, "How do you connect people with the skills that they need, while inviting them to learn an expanded and inclusive body of knowledge?" For the answer to this question, I had, once again, to go back to some of the research literature - I needed vocabulary with which to express this concept. Jean Anyon uses the word "honest" and I have adopted it to mean inclusive.

We also had a lot of discussion about learning styles. We found a lot of assertions about ethnically based learning styles to which we could add little in the way of empirical support. These notions of "multicultural learning styles" had little resonance with my own teaching. In retrospect, I realize that it was my experiences at Journey House that helped me to

stay kind of intellectually honest: I kept reflecting back on those poor, white students who certainly didn't learn in any of the ways that the so-called literature ascribed to non-minority student. In realized in fact, that what those books were describing was how middle-class students learned.

In a similar fashion, throughout the whole process of writing, I found myself confronting theory with my own experience and visa versa. Back and forth it would go like this: contradictions would emerge, assumptions would become voiced. So what took shape was a dialogue of sorts.

Tony That's an important point. You came at educational theory having been "schooled" by a multitude of experiences that allowed you to critically assess what you were reading. You used that "filter" of experience, if you may, to ponder the validity of these questions. It seems that you took on at that point an empirical position: you raised some questions and sough evidence for their validation. At the same time, you were being informed by readings which validated your own assertions or intuitions about the role that culture plays or should play in the process of education.

As I understand it, Madeline Grumet, among others, has helped you situate yourself as a kind of researcher-actor in this process of exploring multicultural education. Can you elaborate on that?

Eva

Well that's exactly it. Grumet suggests that teachers are both artists and scientists. Paulo Freire has also spoken to this, saying that our progress will depend on our "being more artists and less scientists." When I look back at the points at which I made certain pedagogical decisions, I realize that I employed a process similar to the one she describes. This is a process whereby you know with the artist's eye - observing, participating, intuiting with the visceral knowledge that Donmoyer talks about, then almost simultaneously step back like the scientist, trying to make some sense out of what you've observed. When action and reflection resolve into one image, you've developed an hypothesis, or as she calls it, "knot."

An example of this is how the Multicultural Curriculum and my teaching have both departed from skills-based teaching and multicultural teaching based on infusing the curriculum with ethnic artifacts.

When I was teaching at Journey House, I observed students studying to take their GED test; they were studying on their own, using the published curriculum which you can still find in a lot of classrooms. But there were some students, typically students who had not gone beyond the 9th or 10th grade who had a terrible, terrible time, especially with social studies and the reading of certain selections in the literature exam. It didn't take a genius to figure out what was going on there; they had never been exposed to these materials before. They had never heard anything

that sounded like Jane Austin and so her Victorian English was like another language to them. Thanks to their earlier schooling, the had almost no knowledge of important events in U.S., much less world history. In education jargon, they had no "schema" for learning new material. At that point I became convinced of the need to develop curricula around subject area content instead of skills; this decision led to another in favor of grouped instruction. Later on I struggled with what we talked about earlier -- how to negotiate my agenda of content teaching with the student requirement for meaningfulness to come up with syllabi that attempted to make the connections.

When I was working at the Drop-in Center, the idea of content-based teaching came to me again. While the stated goal of the program was to provide GED and/or basic skills for employment, I knew and they knew that their prospects of getting jobs were almost zero. They were black, had been chronically unemployed, many had had brushes with the law, many also were recent or current abusers of narcotics. Because I understood this and knew that pretense would backfire as both dishonest and condescending, I had to re-think what I was doing. It was at that time that I began thinking that what we really need to do is provide adults with adult classes. In topic driven seminars they could access new knowledge and have an opportunity to think and internalize it in terms of their own lives. If what you're teaching is something that people can use, that

doesn't insult them, that empowers their understanding as well as their skills, then you are also enabling them to approach the mainstream as equals. This is what Mike Rose, using his own school experience as a point of reference, calls "invitation." As he writes in his book Lives On the Boundary: "...at times in our past the call for shoring up or return to a canonical curriculum was explicitly elitist, was driven by a fear that the education of the select was being compromised. Today, though, the majority of the calls are provocatively framed in the language of democracy, they assail the mediocre and grinding curriculum frequently found in remedial and vocational education. They are disdainful of the patronizing perceptions of student ability that further restricts the already restricted academic life of disadvantaged youngsters."

I too had rejected the idea that there's one kind of education that one person needs because they're an adult returning to school in a community based organization, and another kind of knowledge for someone who's completing high school or college. Instead, I firmly believe that there are bodies of knowledge that everyone needs to know. I know that this begins to sound like the core curriculum idea, but that gets challenged from another angle by the concept of inclusiveness - Jean Anyon's "honesty."

Tony I believe that what you're talking about is not just an issue of content, but of language as well. Many serious proponents of multicultural

education - Paulo Freire, Macedo and others - speak of the need to change the interaction between teacher and learner. They argue that, to a significant degree, this affects the outcome of the educational process. Frank Herbert, in his novel Dune, describes his young hero, Paul Atreides, ruler of a the desert planet, as the kind of leader that did not simply compel people to follow orders. Rather, Paul was persuasive. What made him persuasive and respected was that he learned the language and "ways" of his people. Like a good teacher, he learned how to learn, and he changed the nature of the interaction between the people and their leader.

It seems that some of what you have been talking about suggests that knowing the language of the people that you are interacting with, whether these have been white displaced workers, white residents of a depressed community, women trying to overcome their lack of exposure to traditional schooling, or the homeless or marginal people of African American, Hispanic, and Native American decent - you have valued the need to learn their language and their ways. I'm not talking about learning Spanish, for example; I'm talking about knowing, like Paul Atreides knew his people, about them. That shapes your interaction with your students. It is the kind of thing that Gordon Wells talks about in his research on learning. He suggests that the most important and contributing factor to the academic success of a learner is the quality and substantiveness of the interaction between learner and teacher. It is the degree to which students find

meaning in that interaction that the teacher becomes authentic to them. Is that what you're talking about?

Eva I believe this is crucial. It's tough to describe and people can make a lot of very bad mistakes here. They can assume with no basis to assume and surely this is not what you are talking about.

Freire writes that in the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor [and whether we like it or not, in a classroom situation, the teacher as the local representative of a curriculum and institutions which oppress], that the oppressor must commit "class suicide." What I believe he means by that is that you must be aware of the privilege class and/or educational background grant you while never allowing that to enter into your relationships with less privileged people; that you must at all times strive for equal relationships.... I don't know how to teach someone to do that - it's a matter of consciousness and will, based on knowing your students so that your respect for them is not a condescending one, but genuine.

Speaking of language --- I have discovered over the years that I have found that in the classroom I sort of have two languages. There's a language that I use in presenting material which requires that certain kinds of concepts be framed with certain kinds of words, but at the same time all concepts, can and should be connected to the familiar, required the

language of intimates. You're straddling two languages at once: On the one hand you have a foot in everyday experience which you as a teacher should know and understand and which is your connection to your students. With the other foot you're in this other, foreign place towards which you want to begin to bring students.

Tony Your teaching philosophy seems to go beyond an embracing of the superficial concept of sensitivity to linguistic or cultural differences. You also seek an understanding of the students' social and class context with an expectation that the can develop a critical consciousness of their context. So you do not limit your involvement with those students to the superficial aspects of culture. Rather, you seek to understand their social condition in order to facilitate students doing the same. There is an assumption being made in this relationship that the world is not just; again, it seems, humanity and partisanship informs this kind of thinking.

Eva I don't want them to learn so that they can pass a test. I want them to learn so they can possess knowledge and use it for themselves. When they know that this is one of my objectives, - and I am explicit about this - a kind of "breathing space" for learning is created; their questions are welcomed as signs of engagement and "I don't understand" is understood as another way of saying "I want to understand." All of this gives me the

opportunity to be a better teacher. It also creates the possibility for other students to realize what they know by helping me with an explanation when I'm having a bad day or falling short or not finding the words. When you respond to their desire to learn, with your desire to teach, they know it. Together these energies create an atmosphere for learning.

Sometimes I feel like a fisherman. I cast out this net -the syllabus - and I want everyone to be able to get into it. There are some fish that are a little too small and they fall through the net, but usually plenty are big enough to stay in the net; some are even exceptionally mature. What this means is that I must develop different relationships with different people. With some of my students - those who have fallen through the net - my objective is to keep in touch and let them know that they can always come back. They can always come back and usually do. Those that are a little bit larger need some very solid basics and lots of what I call "safe practice." Most of all I want them to become engaged in learning and strive to make this experience different from prior experiences that they've had so that they will persist. The big fish are hungry! You don't have to worry about them being there; my concern for them is feeding them enough. They may get another book handed to them or an extra push in their writing. Sometimes I'll set up field trips just for them...Lunch is included.

Tony What I'm hearing you say is that the bottom line, if there can be a bottom line, is that the relationship that evolves between you and your students is one of caring. Earlier we spoke about teacher authenticity. In your case, it becomes explicit through your brand of "advocacy" for students. John Taylor Gato, when talking about the successful teacher, refers to this practice of humanistic caring as being perhaps more important than the ability to impart content - not that he minimizes knowledge of content. Barbara Merino, in her research about effective teaching in multicultural settings, also suggests that the ethnicity of the teacher per se may not be as important as is the establishing of a relationship conducive to learning between the teacher and the learner.

At one point, you decided that this element of humanistic caring should become at least partially visible in your pedagogy through multicultural teaching. Right?

Eva That's right.

Tony Can you describe this experience?

Eva Well it began with the premise that was discussed earlier - that positive identity - cultural identity - leads to learning. When I talk about culture these days, I mean identity formed through lived experience, but

when I began teaching in the bilingual program at MATC, my definition centered more on ethnically-based culture.

Finally I had an opportunity to implement some of the lessons I had suggested and described in the curriculum. I had a lot of fun finding all kinds of readings, primarily by Latin American authors, and developing a syllabus around them. Most of my students were from Mexico, some from Texas, a couple from Central America, another two or three from Puerto Rico and a small handful who'd been born in Milwaukee and were actually English dominant. When I began teaching, I noticed that some of the material got a better response than others. I didn't know if it was me - if I had had a bad day or I hadn't explained something right, or they'd had a bad day and they weren't with me, but I noticed it. When I taught the same set of readings at La Causa's pre-college program (Centro Educativo Pre-colegial Para Adultos), I began to see a pattern. What I noticed (and this is a hypothesis, a "knot" for now) is that for some of the students, some of the older, more ethnically-based material was actually less interesting. An example I can give is a short story by Jorge Ferretis, "Men in a Storm," set in Mexico of the early 1900's in a poor, rural community. There were a couple of people in class who had been schooled in Mexico who did enjoy the story, but there were more people who had not been schooled in Mexico or who were younger and didn't have those historical references or who had come from Mexico City as opposed to the

countryside. For this group this story was no more significant than anything I could have found from the British/ U.S. canon. All of the stories were excellent, in the literacy sense, and should be read as part of a comprehensive study of literature, but the poor reception they received again made me think. I also noticed which stories got positive, even enthusiastic responses; for example: "Just Lather, That's All" by Colombian writer, Hernando Tellez, a dialogue between a revolutionary barber and a notorious army general; "The Little Colored Boy at the Bottom of the Water" by Jose Luis Gonzalez of Puerto Rico, a tragedy set in a poor community with poor housing conditions.

In these cases, it seemed to me that my students were connecting not with culture, but with lived experienced: the fear of police, the desperation of being poor and not to having food to feed your child. They were connecting with the literature as a means for expressing their own fears, frustrations and fantasies. In this exploration, culture of origin was not that important. In a way, it could even detract, becoming more of a politically correct way for a teacher (usually not of the students' background) to negotiate cultural differences by imparting their own (usually decontextualized), than a useful device for connecting with students inside of their lived experience.

When I later read Matute-Bianchi's study of Hispanic females' different responses to schooling which identified recency of immigration/

temporal distance from country-of-origin as issues, I again felt my observations had been validated.

Tony

Proponents of multicultural education would argue that this is what they are also talking about: searching for materials of an ethnic cultural foundation which also speak to relevant themes. Tellez' story about the decisions that people need to make when they are about to challenge authority is relevant because it is similar to the kinds of the decisions that poor Blacks, Hispanics and Whites have to struggle with in their daily lives. What matters is the relevant themes that the materials evoke, not the fact that they were written by somebody of Mexican or Puerto Rican descent. Marva Collins says that Shakespeare can be relevant to children in the Chicago ghettos when they understand - for instance, that Othello, a Black man of the 16th century, struggled with issues of color in his love for Desdimona, a white woman - raising the same issues which arise today in relationships between white women and black men. Conceding to this point, does not, of course, negate the importance of ethnic/minority students knowing that their people, too, have produced great literature.

Eva

The real question, to me, is what is culture. As I said, my view has changed, enlarged. Today I would say that culture is the product of people living in neighborhoods sharing a lived experience which informs their

thinking and living in common ways. Culture, I believe now, is inherently dynamic, ever changing and often, but not always, derived from ethnicity or language. Many of my students are immersed in a culture of survival. It's a culture which, in everything from relationships to recreation, is defined by the commercial mainstream on the one hand and the government institutions which control their lives on the other. From this culture arise themes for learning, themes which have been silenced by "white noise;" they are not aesthetic, they are unpleasant, hard and require an honest search for possibly unpopular answers.

I taught science this past semester. In the beginning, I taught chemistry, principles of science, geology and biology - concepts which I thought my students would need to know in order to understand and participate in a discussion of what has been called "environmental racism." After these basics were laid, we began reading a variety of articles that raised questions about which communities, what people, were most affected by environmental abuse. It was an article by Cesar Chavez, My Anger and Sadness With Pesticides, a speech he gave about how pesticides are affecting California farm workers, that created more interest than anything I remember reading all semester. It was both his powerful words and the stories he told about real people being poisoned, children dying and the effect of unregulated use of pesticides to ensure continued profits for large scale growers and chemical companies, that made his indictment

effective. I wondered if they weren't even grateful to have someone put into elegant words, the anger that they felt.

Tony — You have said that you wanted to go beyond what the simplistic proponents of multicultural education have proposed, those who have suggested that by evoking the images of Africa, Mexico and Puerto Rico, make students more interested in learning. Instead you have moved from a curriculum of superficial treatment of culture to one against marginality, while not denying the importance of inciuding reading materials that are based upon non-U.S./ non-European cultural experience.

Eva — Of course. We must teach the literature of the world, but even these countries are class societies and their stories will reflect that. When choosing which ones to teach from, we must look for a match based on students' nations of origin, but also their economic and social experiences in those countries. When teaching social studies, for example, we must teach the bad with the good - slavery, tyranny, corporate abuse and government corruption are also a part of the history of the world. Students that have come from other countries to this one have usually done so to escape some form of oppression. If we romanticize the conditions of their countries, or explain them as some form of national characteristic, we are both insulting them and ignoring their experience.

Tony

Rudyard Kipling, for example, could be taught as literature which dealt with universal themes such as colonialism (from a colonialist's view point); students would find lessons to be learned from reading him. However, if taught in a detached manner, as simply a literary artifact however, students would not learn to critically draw out the historical and moral lessons. But if an educator teaches Gunga Din with a passionate and critical attitude, and takes sides against victimizing colonial social conditions, he/she creates the possibility for engagement based in indignation. So, when you combine that indignant posture and that passion for justice, then reading material that has a cultural foundation also explores a theme of immediate relevancy; it makes a difference.

What then constitutes the basis of a curriculum against marginality?

Eva

It's a combination of factors. It's a teaching posture which is enabling, one which basically says to students, "You can do this." It persists with students, and has high expectations. As a part of this it insists that students learn bodies of knowledge which will equalize their access to greater knowledge while, at the same time, recognizing the critical importance of attaching meaning to content in order for learning to take place. As Myles Horton says to Paulo Freire, "There's no science that can't be used for good or for evil. Science could be used by whoever has the power and desire to use it. If you make people knowledgeable

about these sciences and don't point out this fact, then you're saying 'I withdraw from the battle. From the discussion of the ethics involved I just stick to the facts and that of course means that you surrendered to the strongest forces.'"

A Curriculum Against Marginality builds on common lived experiences across ethnic/racial delineations in order to explore social and economic relations within a community. At the same time it is very clear that the world as a whole is a source of wisdom and beauty and so the curriculum strives to be honest and inclusive. When we add Hernando Tellez to the curriculum, for example, that's something significant because it says to teachers that, "No, you can't just teach Faulkner and Bronte and Hawthorne and feel that you have taught literature."

Rose's caution to us is that, "the canon has tended to push to the margin much of the literature of our nation from American Indian songs and chants to immigrant fiction to working class narratives. The institutional messages that students receive in the books they're issued and the classes they take are powerful ...."

The point is to use a variety of materials to provide students with opportunities to connect to distant places and different thoughts through what Maxine Greene calls, "the literature of imagination." The importance of doing this is in connecting them with characters, events, places and lessons that are beyond their immediate experience [as I did in my years

when I was working in the factory and in the hospital]. The requirement of immediacy must not be allowed to make the curriculum second class. Relevance and rigor are not mutually exclusive.

Some examples from my teaching come to mind. When we studied the encounter between Columbus and his sailors and the people of the Caribbean islands, we looked at history not just from the standpoint of Columbus, but from that of the people who preceded him there in those islands - specifically the Taino women.

When we studied U.S. colonial history we discussed its class structure because within that discussion lies the answers to other questions: Who was fighting the British and why? What did the middle classes have to gain from being free from Britain? Why and how was it that they had black, Indian and poor whites fight that war for them? What did they have to gain from independence from Britain?

When we study genetics, we should engage students in a discussion of genetic engineering which is oftentimes talked about in terms of creating a "better race". We must ask them: "What makes someone better?" "Why?" "Who should decide?" When we study civics, let's make sure to look at the court system: "How is it organized?" "Why do we need laws?" "To protect what?" "Why?" It's based on property rights for the most part. How did that come to be? How do we see that influence court decisions?

So the power of the curriculum is not just in the content, it's in the message about what's important, what's valuable.

Tony And what about delivery? What about pedagogy?

Eva Well, take analyzing story texture or plot. These should be two objectives of a literature course because the skill of analysis helps to build intellect, but it isn't the only objective because students need to become engaged and critically aware as well. You referred earlier to Macedo who suggested that people first learn to read the world, then the word. This means that discovering one's context, one's place in the world, and learning the truth about that relationship, is pre-requisite to literacy.

Tony If I'm understanding your concept of a curriculum against marginality, it's like a process of critical social interaction between teacher and student....

Eva .... so that the students can ultimately relate to their social context critically and the teacher can facilitate learning better.

Tony And that there is no one answer?

Eva If there's anything that I've learned during these years it's how complex everything is. I think that to gain an appreciation of that is, in and of itself, important for all would-be and present adults to realize. As a society we need to face the next century by rejecting simple, old answers to the very complicated situations and issues that face us, that being able to think is very practical. Marginalized people, especially, need to recognize that they must become involved so that their voices can be heard and their minds can contribute to the defining and framing of the discussions that will go on.

Tony From reading your writing, and listening to you today, what seems to undergird your ideas about a curriculum against marginality is the practice of teaching with an attitude, of partisanship. Could you elaborate a little bit more on the concept of partisanship?

Eva The way I'm using that word is to say that I am not neutral - none of us are. When you bring your attitude into the classroom you are saying that the forbidden topics are subjects of discussion. When I talk about attitude I'm also talking about having an attitude on behalf of my students. I'm talking about having opinions that people should not live in poverty, that when children go to school they should be educated, that when people go to hospitals they have the right to expect good health care, about the

struggles that poor communities face and ought not to face in this country. Opinions are the food for discussions around topics of critical interest which engage students in the exploration of content needed to fully understand the issues.

Partisanship also has psychological benefits. I'm pretty clear with my students that I don't think that the social/economic set up we know is something that we should accept. This "gets the monkey off of their back" because very often, as I mentioned earlier, we don't talk about things in terms of class relations in this country, they think of themselves as loosers, as people who have caused their own failure. I believe it is the truth that there are reasons for their oppression which are external to themselves and I believe that the truth must be said so that they can turn their energies towards understanding these social and economic relationships. Their psyche needs for them to be able to say "the emperor has no clothes", and still feel right about themselves.

Tony Yet. this seems prescriptive. Is that a problem?

Eva It is prescriptive and I make no apologies for that. All education is prescriptive. I choose topics just as other teachers choose them. But I chose, for example, the topic of environmental pollution as the focus of our science exploration, because I wanted them to discover the connection

between reckless environmental policies and the same reckless treatment which poor, minority communities in general receive.

You know, a lot has been written about participatory education. I believe that people are limited in their ability to participate until they know what it is that they're participating in. This was the idea at Highlander: knowledge has to be "spread around," equalized in as democratic a fashion as possible, so that people can become their own advocates.

Yes, I am prescriptive. I don't think that people grow out of looseness and openness. They grow out of knowing something that gives them the power of analysis, and with that the ability to find connections between their reality and places and thoughts in the distance.

Tony Drawing from your personal and classroom experiences, as an adult educator working against marginality, how do you propose that teacher preparation be reformed or changed?

Eva Well, I'd have to agree with Gato. I do think that the relationship between teacher and student must come first. For this to happen future-teachers must have actual and theoretical backgrounds that enable them to understand our multicultural, class-based society. They must be provided with opportunities to spend time in the communities in which they will teach, becoming immersed, learning to observe and listen - as ethnogra-

phers do.

Another issue is that too often graduates of secondary education programs know too little about other content areas, while elementary teachers typically have learned a lot of methods, but have had scant exposure to content material. We need to address both of these kinds of deficiencies.

Tony It is important that teachers like you be able to draw from different disciplines of knowledge; while you're not necessarily a specialist in any one of them, you seem to connect content areas in a way that motivates and interests students, turning them on to the learning process. By building their confidence and disposition to participate, you turn them on to schooling.

Eva I would agree with that. It seems to me that students in Schools of Education spend entirely too much time learning teaching techniques; of course, some of this is important but I am convinced that a good teacher not only has a "bag of tricks" by a "heart," and the first will never replace the second. On the other hand, a teacher who cares and expects her or his students to learn will struggle to find a way to teach.

What we've been talking about really transcends methodology - what we are looking at here is a combination of attitude, pedagogy and content.

Of these I would have to say again that attitude, and here I mean both as partisan and as reflective practitioner, is primary because that is what will keep you questioning, learning and trying new things. Through a reflective process, teachers who work with marginalized students will come to understand the importance of authenticity and the importance of teaching from lived experience.

Tony Surely, there is a lot more to be said about teaching against marginality. Our dialogue today is but a beginning, but a good one. I only hope that others, especially those who are working to prepare teachers for urban America, can do the same.

[Initially recorded on July 5, 1993]

CHAPTER 4

The Emergent Voice:

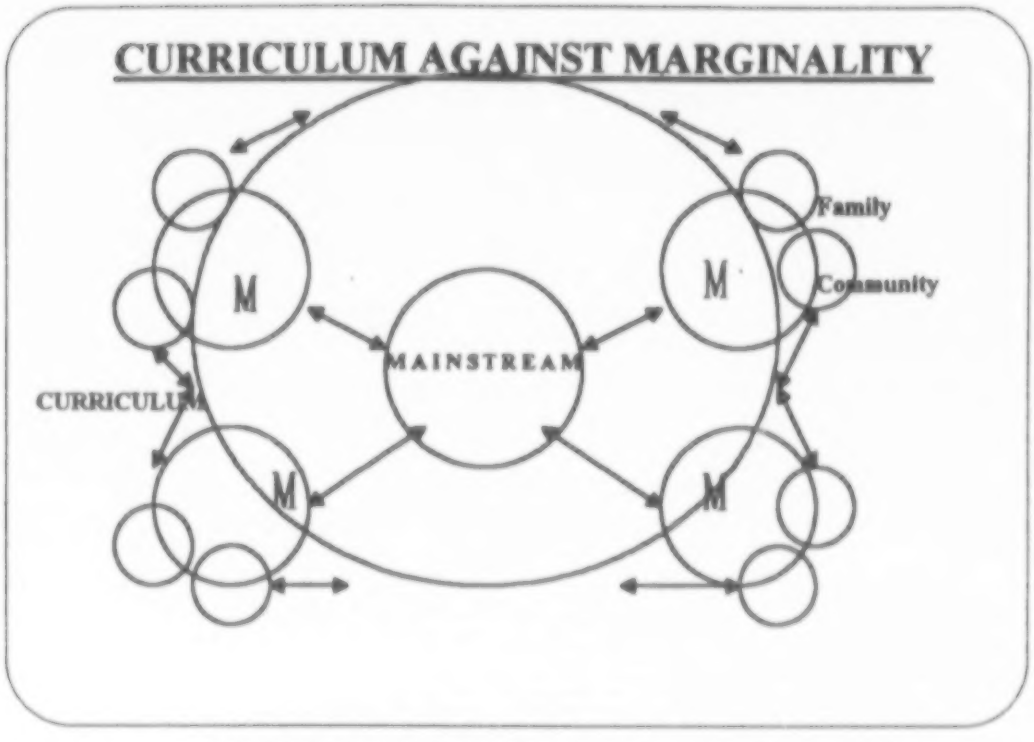
Multicultural Education Against Marginality

By way of summarizing the "theories of action" which have emerged from the retrospect of Chapter 3, this concluding chapter will present an alternative model of Multicultural Education Against Marginality, depicted in figure 4 [following page]. This curriculum against marginality agrees at its core with La Belle's assumption (1977) that:

> Until a greater balance of socio-economic power is achieved among groups on this society...education for cultural pluralism is [not] feasible ...such a power balance will not be attained through the schools except as an adjunct to the distribution of resources like jobs, housing, political decision-making and the like in the wider society.

It is my belief that in our stratified society, equity requires social/economic transformation, and education for transformation must enable critical examination of too-often-forbidden topics which, while connected to ethnic culture at points, have far more to do with poverty, discrimination, police violence and the class-based inequalities found in everything from employment opportunity to environmental pollution polices. The models

Figure 4.



M = Marginalized, i.e. distanced from the social and economic mainstream due to coloredness, "low-status" language and poverty. Pedagogy and Curriculum aims to assimilate students into the mainstream through individual and community transformation.

Marginalized students are connected with each other through a curriculum which "moves out" to them at the point of their lived experiences. Culture is understood to be dynamic so, while it is tapped into for the development of learning activities, it is students' everyday marginalization which is the curriculum's focus. Native language is used for cognitive and identity development.

"Honesty" replaces multiculturalism as the driving force in curriculum construction. Generative Themes tie together instructional content and activities to counteract silencing and promote critical thinking. Pride is based on this accomplishment which in turn impacts the mainstream and it's perception/relationship to the margins.

Family and community are valued and present in the school and its curriculum; home-school dissonance is eliminated

presented in Chapter 2 (Traditional and Multicultural) are not equipped to meet this task. At their heart, while proposing different means to an end, they support the values of the market place (Giroux, 1987) which have been the cornerstone of educational initiatives since the inception of public education, but most visibly over the past several decades (Finklestein, 1992). These values, which are the foundation of both acculturationist and multicultural assimilationist (Gordon, 1964) models, are set within the philosophical framework of individualism. As such they are not just implicitly at odds with many of the core values of marginalized groups within our society, but are contradicted by their experience vis a vis the mainstream (Fine, 1989).

Rather than acknowledging their reality and thereby opening channels to learning which could lead to the acquisition of the knowledge and skills to examine, analyze and finally change their reality (Freire, 1982), they instead contribute to the failure and marginalization of poor and working class, language and ethnic/racial minority students. The lesson to too many students who do persist is that obedience and passive acceptance win approval; for their belief they are taught the official curriculum if they are lucky, warehoused in underachieving schools and programs if they are not. Resisters, on the other hand, simply decide that there is nothing in the curriculum for them (Aronowitz, 1973) and leave the system which degrades them and their potential.

Multiculturalism alone will not offset this. As Giroux (1987) states:

> .... it is not enough for teachers to merely dignify the grounds on which students learn to speak, imagine and give meaning to their world. This is important but it is also crucial for teachers to understand how schools, as part of the wider dominant culture often function to marginalize, disconfirm and delegitimate the experiences, histories, and categories that students use in

> mediating their lives. This means understanding how texts, classroom relations, teacher talk and other aspects of the formal and hidden curricula of schooling often function to actively silence students.

Or as Cheng, et al. (1981, 157) suggest in a somewhat different vein:

> Unless there are some significant ideological shifts, we fear multicultural education could easily fit into prevailing practices.... the dominant schooling/pedagogical ideology [which] promotes individualism, competitiveness, selfishness and self-interest...cooperation, altruism, caring and concern, and **social responsibility** ought to be the underpinning ideology for effective pedagogy in multicultural education programs. [emphasis added].

Just as upper and middle class students benefit from curricula which prepare them with the content, outlook and analytical skills which they will need to assume successful places in the socio-economic order,[18] this calls for a curriculum which connects marginalized students through their common experiences vis a vis mainstream institutions with the academic skills and critical attitude which they will need in order to challenge their marginality.

In this alternative model, curricular content would be described as "honest," i.e. inclusive of the literature, history, philosophy of not just their particular ethnicities, but of their shared economic class.

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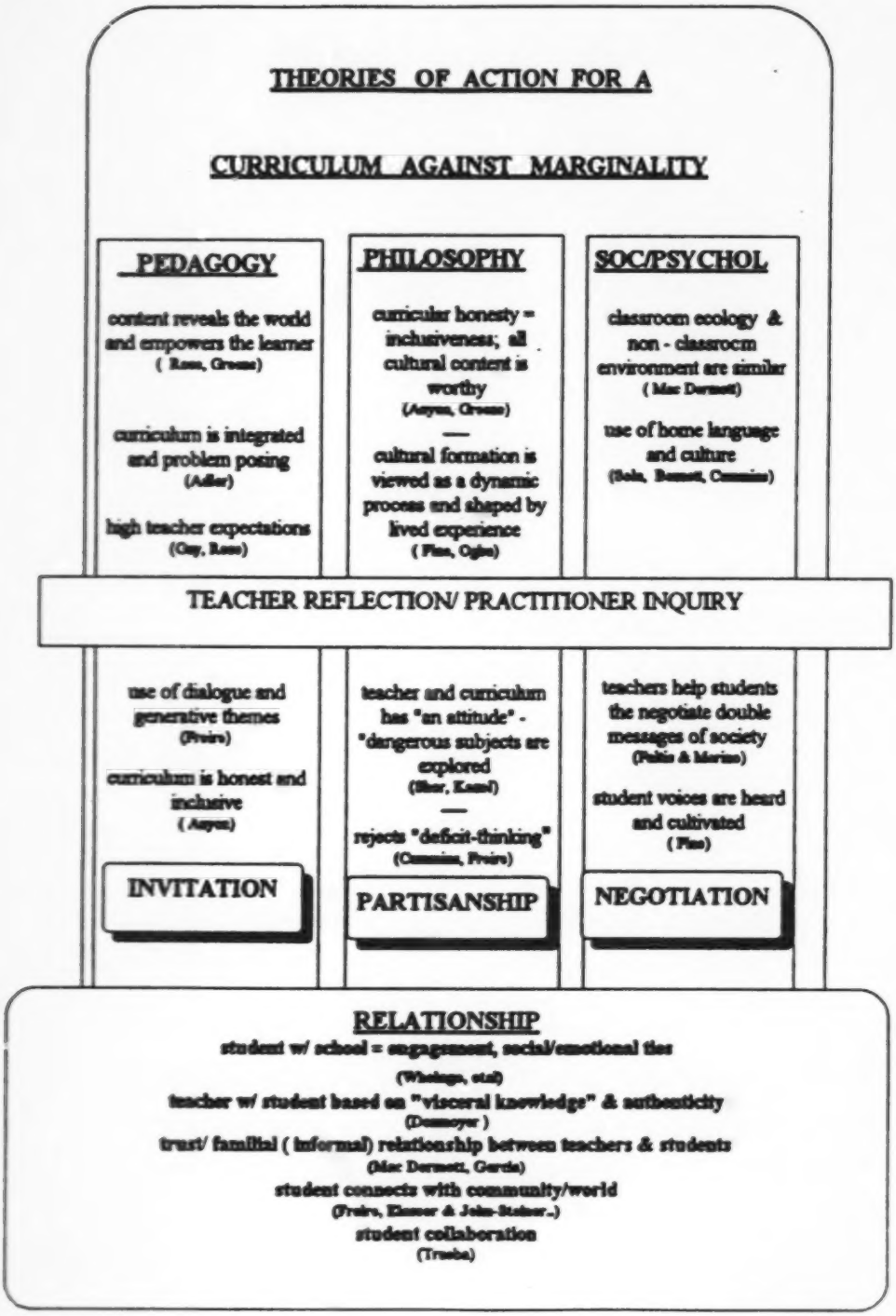
[18]Jean Anyon, in her case study of school curriculum ("Social class and school knowledge"), concluded that indeed all education is "reproductive", i.e. prepares students to reproduce their class-of-origin. The working class school curriculum which she studied provided "little or no conceptual or critical understanding of the world or of their situation in the world," students were expected to be passive, well behaved learners and school relations were characterized by authoritarianism. By contrast, the affluent, professional school taught their students their own history - that of affluent classes. "They are, as well, taught ways of expressing and using such ideas - that ideology - in their own interests... " Finally, the executive elite school, actually teaches class consciousness explicitly. In this school, "school knowledge was the most 'honest about society, U.S. social problems, and social irrationalities. It was sometimes expressive of liberal concerns ... indeed it came closest to being socially critical."

Figure 5.



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Theories of Action

The triple imperative of excellence, equity and empowerment with which Geneva Gay (1988) has challenged educators are, I believe, answered by the following "theories of action." They have emerged out of a process of practice-based-on-reflection and reflection-upon-practice which is more specifically narrated in the Chapter 3 dialogue. To use Madeline Grumet's word, these are the "knots" which are simultaneously interpreter of and guide to teaching, which I shall use in my work with under-prepared, marginalized adults.

** **Invitation**: Schools and teachers must insist on a level of academic rigor and content acquisition more usually associated with traditional models (Gay, 1988), while departing from its ideology through an honest and inclusive curriculum (Anyon, 1981). Didactic teaching of content, inspired by investigations into the themes of students' everyday lives, invite the student to understand and enable them to eventually pose and solve problems (Adler, 1983) of their choosing.

Invitation is the teacher initiative which most clearly communicates the message of high expectations to students struggling to see themselves (Rose, 1990) and the world (Greene, 1978) differently. "The notion of emancipatory literacy," write Freire and Macedo (1987),

> suggests two dimensions of literacy. On the one hand, students have to become literate about their histories, experiences and the culture of their immediate experience. On the other hand they must also

appropriate those codes and cultures of the dominant spheres so they can transcend their own environments.

** **Negotiation:** Since all meaning is negotiated through what we already know, subject-based learning objectives must be connected to students' life experience, home language and culture (Sola & Bennett, 1985; Cummins, 1989), thereby shortening the distance/dissonance between home and school (MacDermott, 1974), and providing an audience for students' psychic needs and social concerns (Fine, 1989; Ogbu, 1992).

Adopting the pedagogically sound principles of multicultural education, including the call for inclusiveness, this reconceptualization rejecting the often static, almost exotic, definition of culture which fails to recognize socio-economic class as a powerful mitigator in the construction of identity and self-image. Instead, the common experiences of living in marginalized communities, are used to engage students in content acquisition (Faltis & Merino, 1992).

** **Partisanship**: Both the teacher and the curriculum has "an attitude." Their combined purpose is to engage students in a critical examination of their experiences as poor, usually non-white, often non-English speaking, vis a vis mainstream institutions. While teacher advocacy creates a classróom environment which provides a sympathetic place in which adult learners can acquire the volition and vocabulary with which they can adequately express their indignation, curriculum content includes "dangerous subjects" (Kozol, 1980), organized around "generative

themes" (Freire, 1970, 1981), signaling a connection with and advocacy for students' families and community.

Both teacher and curriculum explicitly reject "deficit-thinking" as the racist and class-biased philosophical framework of remedial/ acculturationist education (Cummins, 1984). All students are capable of learning; deficits are a result of missed opportunities and miseducation and are not intrinsic to the student.

** **Relationship**: Relationship is both the stimulus and the derivative of all of the above, but, as MacDermott (1974) reminds us, its development begins with the teacher whose responsibility it is to connect with students and their families through actions which reveal her/his authenticity and sympathetic understanding (Gato, 1992). This relationship can be characterized as one of trust and familial familiarity and caring (Garcia, 1988). Reflective activity which enables him/her to come to "viscerally know" his or her students begins with spoken or written dialogue (Elsasser & John-Steiner, 1977), and observation of students, resulting in student academic engagement, as well as "school-bonding" (Wehlage, 1990).

Teaching a syllabus works hand-in-glove with developing an ambience which is at once safe and demanding. Our classrooms are harbors wherein we welcome our students as experienced travelers of dangerous waters and equip them with what they will need for the storms which they have surely not left behind. In these harbors, they learn to rely on each other as well as on the teacher (Trueba, 1989).

**** Reflection:** The final ingredient in this reconceptualization of Multicultural Education is practitioner inquiry. Every community, every class, every individual student will demand that we rethink our assumptions - no matter how time-tested or brand-new they are. Each context deserves that the teacher think anew about those variables over which she/he has no control like student characteristics and community issues, as well as those which she/he does - namely pedagogy, including both not limited to methods and materials. The best semester and most inspired lesson, still provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon what to do right the next time.

We must strive to understand how we make our decisions so that we can contribute to our own, and our colleagues, education. We must, also, not shy away from saying what we "know" even if we know it by some uncertified means .

Our "knots" are made, and can be undone, by us.

The Braid is Made ... for Now

So, I have arrived at this articulation of teaching against marginality. It reads, I think, more like an epistle than an essay; it is dedicated to yesterday's at-risk children who are now raising the next generation of kids who are daily insulted, intimidated, ignored and denied a high quality and meaningful education in our nation's public schools. Despite almost numbing experiences they believe in the value of education so much that they have decided to return to school; this time they deserve and must receive

an education which is the antithesis of their earlier experiences. They deserve teachers who are not just competent, but have devoted themselves to knowing their students and developing a language which conveys unequivocal partisanship. For them we must face each day with a passion for justice, an observant eye and a questioning mind so that we can continue the braiding ...

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